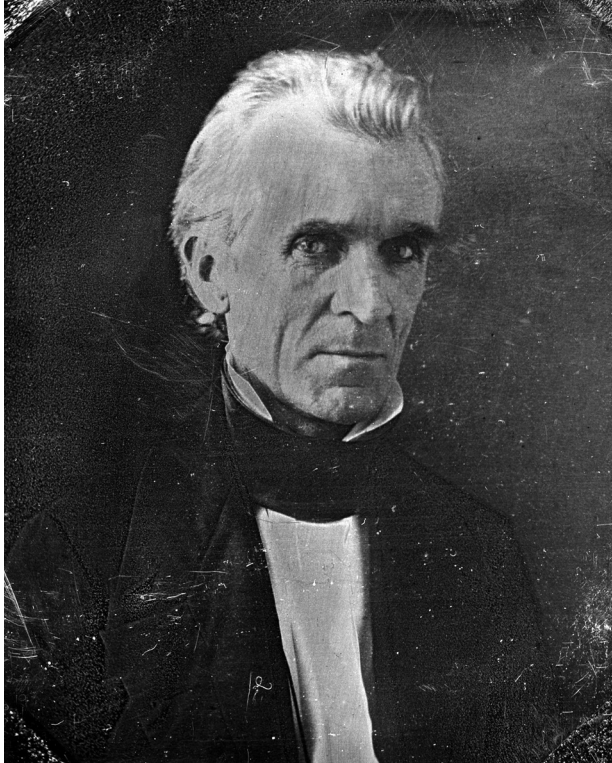


Correspondence of James K. Polk

VOLUME XIII, AUGUST 1847–MARCH 1848



JAMES K. POLK

*Detail of daguerreotype by Thomas M. Easterly, c. 1848.
Easterly Daguerreotype Collection,
Missouri History Museum, St. Louis.*

Correspondence of
JAMES K. POLK

Volume XIII
August 1847–March 1848

MICHAEL DAVID COHEN

Editor

Bradley J. Nichols

Editorial Assistant

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*To
Herbert Weaver, Wayne Cutler, and Tom Chaffin*

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The Polk Project, now nearly complete, has a long history. My efforts build on those of earlier editors. This volume is dedicated to those who directed the project for more than half a century. The late Herbert Weaver initiated it in 1958 and led work on the first four volumes. Wayne Cutler oversaw the production of the next seven. The continuation and consistency of the series attest not only to Dr. Weaver's wisdom in making these primary sources accessible but also to both men's

development of sensible editorial practices that, with few changes, have stood the test of time. Dr. Cutler also showed uncommon cordiality and encouragement when new editors arrived to take on the project after his retirement.

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MICHAEL DAVID COHEN

INTRODUCTION

Herbert Weaver, in 1969, began his preface to Volume 1 of this series with a question: “Who is James K. Polk?” Whigs had asked that about the unexpected Democratic presidential nominee in 1844. The question, Dr. Weaver pointed out, reflected the Tennessean’s recent political history. After seven terms in the U.S. House, two of them as Speaker, Polk had served a single term as governor but then twice suffered defeat for reelection. When his party chose him as its candidate for the highest office in the land, he had been out of national office for five years and a private citizen for three. Whig nominee Henry Clay’s supporters denigrated the presidential ambitions of a down-on-his-luck Democrat.

Polk, of course, won the election. His exceptionally busy four years in the White House taught supporters and opponents alike just who he was: one of the most consequential presidents in U.S. history. Not only did his actions increase the geographical size of the country by one-third (and reduce that of Mexico by one-half), but, as many at the time recognized, Western expansion heightened the sectional conflict over slavery—a conflict that, a dozen years after Polk left office, split the nation in two. Though he fell into relative obscurity during the second half of the nineteenth century, scholars discovered anew in the twentieth century that, as Weaver put it, “this persistent, stubborn, hard-working, somewhat colorless Tennessean had been grossly underestimated.” In 1962, Weaver noted, historians surveyed by Arthur M. Schlesinger, Sr., ranked him as a “near great” president.

Weaver attributed the new attention to the 1910 publication of Polk’s diary. He also alluded to an anecdote about Polk’s setting and accomplishing finite goals for his presidency, first published in the 1880s and repeated countless times since, which had lent an aura of success to Polk’s administration and added to his stature. “[H]istorians,” Weaver concluded, “had finally answered” the 125-year-old question.

James K. Polk was the president who fought the Mexican War and who “achieved every one of his main objectives.”¹

Now, however, thanks largely to Dr. Weaver, historians have the resources to answer that question more fully than they could half a century ago. The first twelve volumes of the *Correspondence of James K. Polk* cover Polk’s rise to prominence, temporary setback, election to the presidency, and pursuit of his objectives in Washington. In Volume 1 he finishes college, opens a law practice, initiates his first cotton plantation, and wins election to the Tennessee House and the U.S. House. In Volume 2 he purchases the Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation that he retains for the rest of his life. He becomes Speaker of the House in Volume 3 and governor in Volume 5, but in that and the next volume he loses his bids for reelection. Volumes 7 and 8 cover the presidential campaign of 1844, and every volume since, Polk’s presidency. Volume 11 brings both the launch of the Mexican War and the fruition of three of his four famous goals: the Walker Tariff, the Independent Treasury system, and the settling of the U.S.-Canada boundary in the Oregon Country. Only the acquisition of California, a province occupied by U.S. forces since 1846 but not yet officially ceded by Mexico, remains unfinished as the volume you hold in your hands begins.

Volume 13 of the *Correspondence* documents a critical juncture in Polk’s administration and in the history of North America: the end of the Mexican War. (For brevity and consistency, I continue to use that traditional term for the war in the annotation.) In August 1847 Gen. Winfield Scott’s troops were heading toward Mexico City and the president was preparing to call forth new soldiers for the final assault. Over the coming months, Polk and his correspondents reacted to a litany of military, political, and diplomatic challenges. Two courts of inquiry into misconduct by Gen. Gideon J. Pillow and the court-martial of Col. John C. Frémont demanded the president’s attention. General-in-Chief Winfield Scott and diplomat Nicholas P. Trist irritated Polk both when they refused to cooperate and on the rare occasion when they did, futilely attempting to win a treaty through a million-dollar bribe. Finally Polk recalled them both, though Trist ignored his decision and continued to negotiate. Back at home, Henry Clay delivered a highly publicized speech that galvanized opposition to the war. Both prominent politicians and regular Americans wrote to the president expressing their views.

On February 2, 1848, Trist and Mexican commissioners signed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The Senate approved and amended it on March 10, and Polk sent commissioners to obtain the approval of Mexico’s Congress. (His choice of Attorney General Nathan Clifford as associate commissioner brought the first change in the cabinet since

1846.) Under that peace treaty, which Mexico accepted in May and Polk proclaimed on July 4, the United States acquired Mexico's territories of Alta California and New Mexico. Now arose the question of how to govern the new lands—plus Oregon, which still had only a provisional government—a question complicated by Texas's attempt to administer much of New Mexico as a Texas county. Still, with California annexed, Polk had completed the goals so often linked to him.

But James K. Polk was more than four goals and a war. Tom Chaffin, in his introduction to Volume 12 of the *Correspondence*, shows that the four-goals story rests on very limited evidence. Only George Bancroft, the historian who served Polk first as secretary of the navy and then as minister to the United Kingdom, recalled the president's enunciating such a list. Even he seems never to have mentioned it until four decades after the fact. Bancroft may have unwittingly imagined Polk's prediction in light of later events or intentionally invented a story to improve his onetime employer's reputation. Scholars would do well, Dr. Chaffin apprises us, to look beyond the supposed four goals when studying the Polk administration.²

Indeed, while the Mexican War, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, and the acquisition of new territory in the West figure prominently in this volume's letters, numerous other issues and initiatives concerned Polk's circle between August 1847 and March 1848. On the foreign-policy front, diplomats continued their efforts to negotiate treaties with the Zollverein (the German states' customs union) and the Kingdom of Hawaii. Polk received appeals to purchase Cuba for the United States. His government established diplomatic relations with Bolivia, Ecuador, Guatemala, and the Papal States. One correspondent, international lawyer and trader Aaron H. Palmer, even recommended diplomatic action to enhance trade with Russia and China. And, once a series of revolutions began exploding across Europe, U.S. diplomats reported to Polk on the violence and political upheaval in Switzerland, Denmark, France, and the various independent states of Italy and Germany.

Domestic topics in this volume range from slavery to Indian relations to religion. With huge swaths of Mexican land about to become American, politicians and citizens wondered whether slavery would enter the new territories. Congress debated the Wilmot Proviso, a provision amended to several bills but never passed, which would have banned slavery in any land acquired from Mexico. Pennsylvania medical student William J. Gamble wrote an antislavery letter to the president that earned a backhanded compliment from Polk's secretary: "is an abolitionist, *but* writes well." Andrew Lane, a Connecticut lawyer and, like Polk, an absentee planter, wrote of the potential for "a dissolution of the Union" should the Wilmot Proviso pass.

Meanwhile, the removal of eastern Native American peoples to reservations west of the Mississippi, begun during the presidency of Andrew Jackson, continued under Jackson's protégé. Letters expose new tensions that emerged with Indians as U.S. whites expanded into Oregon and southwestern Texas. Two letters from Dakota leaders in what would soon become Minnesota Territory discuss conflicts both among Indian peoples in that region and between them and U.S. officials.

Polk showed little sympathy for the plights of African Americans and Native Americans—he owned numerous slaves and apparently did not respond to the Dakotas—but he did sympathize with the challenges of white religious minorities. Both he and his wife, Sarah Childress Polk, assisted the Mormons after he received a letter about their violent expulsion from Illinois. And, in a clash with a Presbyterian minister irate over Polk's appointment of Catholic priests to accompany the army, the president affirmed the separation of church and state and earned the praise of Bishop John J. Hughes.

Confrontations emerged for the administration both within Washington and across the Atlantic. In December Polk submitted his reasons for having refused to sign the Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill of 1847, a plan for federally funded internal improvements. The same month Whigs, for the first time since Polk had entered office, took control of the U.S. House. Meanwhile, discontent with British charges on mail carried by a U.S. steamship led Postmaster General Cave Johnson to cancel all postal arrangements with the United Kingdom.

Little occupied politicians' minds and pens more than partisan politics. Especially upsetting to Polk and his fellow Democrats were the Whigs' victories in Tennessee's elections of August 1847—including Neill S. Brown's defeat of incumbent governor Aaron V. Brown, Polk's longtime friend—and the New York Democratic party's split that fall into the Barnburner and Old Hunker factions. The next year, as a presidential election loomed, partisans reported to the president on various state conventions preparatory to the Democratic National Convention, to held in Baltimore in May. Despite Polk's 1844 promise and continuing resolve to serve only one term, some urged him to become a candidate. Vice President George M. Dallas and Secretary of State James Buchanan did enter the electoral fray, as did Sen. Lewis Cass, the eventual Democratic nominee. Whig possibilities included perennial candidate Clay and Gen. Zachary Taylor, still commanding troops in Mexico and, in the end, Polk's successor.

Requests for patronage and charity, as always, took up much of the president's time. The constant stream of jobseekers and their advo-

cates, both appearing at the White House and writing letters, probably amplified his growing anxiety to retire. They sought positions from the District of Columbia to Oregon to Hong Kong to Rome—and, of course, appointments in the large and growing army. Among those recommending appointees were Nathaniel Hawthorne, a customs official in Salem, Mass.; Abraham Lincoln, a congressman from Illinois; and Jefferson Davis, a U.S. senator from Mississippi. An Ohio congressman, meanwhile, forwarded a request for Lt. Ulysses S. Grant's promotion. And not only men sought favors from the president. Sarah Angelica Singleton Van Buren, Martin Van Buren's daughter-in-law and White House hostess, asked for her husband's return from Mexico; General Land Office worker Barbara Ellen Berry Hume asked for continued employment so she could support her two daughters; and Ohio students Frances H. Lanphear and Jane Tweedy slyly hinted that "some kind hand" might pay for their education. Polk usually did not respond to such requests. When asked, though, he did give money toward the construction of a church near his plantation for African American slaves.

Thomas Edison and Alexander Graham Bell, both born in 1847, were infants during the months covered by this volume. But an earlier generation of scientists was busy developing and marketing its inventions. The letters herein document the widening network of Samuel F. B. Morse's telegraph and the invention by Philippe-Jacques Friederich Ferdinand of an improved method for measuring water's depth. They also discuss the ongoing increase in railroads and canals, including interest in using one or the other to connect the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through Mexico or Central America. U.S. steamships, meanwhile, began linking the eastern states to California and Oregon as well as the United Kingdom; correspondents proposed extending their reach to China and Hawaii, though those dreams, like the Panama Canal, were fulfilled only in later decades.

With Polk's death only fifteen months away in March 1848, it is perhaps unsurprising that death and illness figure throughout this volume. In August 1847 Polk had to inform a friend, navy purser Jeremiah George Harris, that his wife had died. On Christmas Eve Sen. John Fairfield, another friend, died following a knee surgery. The next February John Quincy Adams, a former president and current congressman, suffered a stroke during a House debate and died in the U.S. Capitol. The September 1847 death of Daniel O'Connell, leader of Ireland's Repeal movement, also prompted American mourning, though Polk did not accept an invitation to a ceremony in New York City. That same month he and his wife, Sarah Childress Polk, fell sufficiently ill that the president stayed in bed for a week. He again fell ill in

November. Patent-medicine manufacturers, eager to help and, perhaps, obtain a presidential endorsement, sent him samples of their wares.

Polk, however, though “haggard and grey” according to Andrew Lane’s letter, turned only fifty-two in November 1847. He expected to live well beyond his presidency and was preparing to retire to a Nashville estate. Many of his letters concern that property, formerly owned by Felix Grundy, his legal mentor, which he had purchased in 1846. An explosion that forced him to rebuild and a dispute over title to an adjoining avenue caused him unease. Others, including William S. Cassedy, a would-be historian of the Polk administration, were concerned with preserving and exalting the eleventh president’s memory. In one of this volume’s final letters, Nashville lawyer Alfred Balch asserts that, if Mexico approves the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, “your destiny will be happily accomplished.”

Polk found time to correspond about other private business and with his family. His business concerns included selling various plots of land and ensuring the proper payment of his taxes. This volume does not include any letters between James and Sarah Polk, for the simple fact that they spent these eight months together in Washington. The president’s correspondents did include his one surviving brother, William H. Polk, whom he appointed an army major; a sister, Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell, whom he offered financial advice; and their mother, Jane Knox Polk, whom he updated on William’s activities. Polk also offered advice and assistance to various young relatives. Among the older friends whose letters appear herein is Florida governor William D. Moseley, Polk’s roommate at the University of North Carolina and a corecipient of the very first letter in Volume 1.

Absent from this volume, unlike some previous ones, are letters by African Americans. Yet, though no letter known to have been written by a black man or woman to Polk during these eight months has been found, African Americans are very much a part of the stories told herein. The acquisition by the United States of half of Mexico—where slavery had been abolished—and the debates over the Wilmot Proviso brought immediate and long-term consequences for the millions of slaves in the South. On a more intimate level, Polk corresponded with overseer John A. Mairs and other agents in Tennessee and Mississippi about the disposition of his own slaves. For example, he directed Long Harry, a blacksmith whose labor he theretofore had sold to men in Carrollton, Miss., to return to his plantation (and thus away from Harry’s wife and children). He also received news about the latest escape by Joe, a slave who repeatedly fled the plantation. Polk, earlier in his presidency, had professed ignorance of Mexican peace negotiations’ connection to slav-

ery and a wish to keep his own trading of slaves out of the public eye.³ But both the macro and the micro scales of forced labor played major roles in his life and correspondence.

This volume contains complete transcriptions of 224 letters, detailed briefs of five, and concise calendar summaries of 445. Of those published in full, Polk wrote fifty-four. Over fifteen hundred textual, contextual, and identificational notes accompany the transcriptions and briefs. As usual, I have eschewed rigid selection criteria in an effort to publish the most important, illuminating, or interesting letters on a wide range of topics. Somewhat shorter than previous volumes, this one ends at a key historical turning point. The letters herein help us to answer the question “Who is James K. Polk?” More generally, the series that Dr. Weaver began, stretching now from Polk’s college days to the end of the Mexican War, shows how much more complex a man and politician he was than historians could know in 1969.

But these letters do much more. They survive from an era when most white Americans were literate, political participation was high, presidents claimed to represent all the people, and postage to the White House was free.⁴ Those in Volume 13 discuss politics and business, war and peace, race and gender, religion and science, agriculture and trade, family and friendship, art and leisure, life and death. They came from or went to Tennessee and Oregon and Maine, England and France and Prussia, Mexico and Hawaii and Jamaica. Their writers and recipients were men and women, adults and youths, whites and Indians, politicians and diplomats, generals and clergymen, craftsmen and farmers, artists and writers, students and businessmen, lawyers and doctors. And, thanks to his use of the era’s copying technology, Polk kept duplicates of his outgoing letters in addition to the originals of incoming ones.⁵ In preserving his mail, he created a uniquely diverse cache of primary-source material. Stored in archives, libraries, and private collections and now published, the *Correspondence of James K. Polk* offers a glimpse into war, politics, diplomacy, economics, society, and culture in antebellum America.

MICHAEL DAVID COHEN
EDITOR, *CORRESPONDENCE OF JAMES K. POLK*

1. Herbert Weaver, introduction to *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, vol. 1, 1817–1832 (Nashville: Vanderbilt Univ. Press, 1969), ix–x. For the history of the goals anecdote, see the following note.

2. Tom Chaffin, introduction to *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, vol. 12, *January–July 1847*, ed. Chaffin and Michael David Cohen (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2013), pp. xxxiii–xl, xlix–li. See also Chaffin, *Met His Every Goal? James K. Polk and the Legends of Manifest Destiny* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2014).

3. Polk, diary entry of August 10, 1846, in *The Diary of James K. Polk during His Presidency, 1845 to 1849*, ed. Milo Milton Quaife (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1910), 2:75; Polk to Robert Campbell, Jr., January 23, 1847, in *Correspondence of James K. Polk*, 12:57.

4. On literacy, see David Tyack and Elisabeth Hansot, *Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1990), p. 52, table 3; on voter turnouts, see Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1999), p. 332; on presidents as representatives, see Paul H. Bergeron, *The Presidency of James K. Polk* (Lawrence: Univ. Press of Kansas, 1987), p. xiii. Postage was typically paid by recipients even after the first U.S. postage stamp was introduced in 1847. See Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1995), pp. 160–61.

5. During his presidency, Polk duplicated most of his letters using a copy press. The machine had first been patented in 1780 by James Watt; manufacturers had since introduced various refinements, including the ability to copy a large number of letters into a book, as Polk did. Most of the letters by Polk in this volume have been found only in his press-copy books; they are marked “press copy” in the headnotes. See Barbara Rhodes and William Wells Streeter, *Before Photocopying: The Art & History of Mechanical Copying, 1780–1938* (New Castle, Del.: Oak Knoll Press; Northampton, Mass.: Heraldry Bindery, 1999), pp. 193, 59–62.

EDITORIAL PRACTICE

The editor of Volume 13 of the *Correspondence of James K. Polk* has, in most regards, retained the editorial policies of his predecessors. Beginning with Volume 12, however, the editors have modified policies to enhance completeness, conciseness, or clarity. The guiding purpose has remained the clear and accurate presentation of Polk's correspondence, with annotation that enables modern readers to understand and use those original documents.

The main body of this volume consists of letters transcribed in full or, in a few cases, summarized—"briefed"—in detail. At the end of the volume, a calendar lists all known extant correspondence from the period covered by the volume, with short summaries of letters not appearing in the main body. Published or briefed letters are annotated with endnotes. I define Polk's correspondence as all letters written by or to him. These include circulars (letters sent to multiple recipients) and notes (letters written in the third person), but not other documents sent by mail (such as newspaper clippings, meeting proceedings, or bills). I do not include anything published in James D. Richardson's *Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents* or any reports published in John Bassett Moore's *Works of James Buchanan*; though some of these messages and reports begin with a date and salutation, they are letters in form only and can be found in those volumes.¹

Aware that readers' main attention should fall on the texts of the letters, I have limited my annotations to identifications, information about those texts, and necessary context. People, events, organizations, publications, other topics, quotations, and uncommon terms are identified at their first mention in the volume, though people mentioned in headnotes are identified there only if they appear in no letter's heading or text. Thereafter, if a letter alludes to a person by an incomplete name or by a description, or alludes to a topic by an unclear name, a

note gives the full name as it appears in the index. Exceptions to this rule are those few individuals who appear with such frequency throughout the volume, and whose surnames are sufficiently distinct, that I decided giving their full names was unnecessary. In Volume 13, these exceptions are George Bancroft, Thomas H. Benton, James Buchanan, John C. Calhoun, Nathan Clifford, William L. Marcy, John Y. Mason, General Santa Anna, Winfield Scott, Zachary Taylor, and Nicholas P. Trist. Similarly, I have not explained in each instance that “General Jackson” is Andrew Jackson or that “Mrs. Polk” (or another obvious reference to the president’s wife) is Sarah Childress Polk. If a letter or annotation refers simply to “Polk” or “the president,” readers should assume that the reference is to James K. Polk. For Native American correspondents, few of whom signed their own names and whose names whites spelled many ways, I use in the annotation the names that appear in the letters, with mention of other common spellings, translations, and alternate names by which they were known. In the annotation I refer to the war fought by the United States and Mexico by the succinct term that Polk and many of his correspondents used, “the Mexican War.”

In general, I have transcribed the letters faithfully with a strict regard for original spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and text placement. To improve clarity and to accommodate the demands of printed type, however, I have yielded to a few standard rules of normalization. I have capitalized initial words of sentences and supplied sentence-ending punctuation if sentence divisions are clear; if sentence divisions are unclear, I have indicated so in notes. If a word in a manuscript can be read with equal ease as either the conventional or an unconventional spelling, I have transcribed it as the former. Similarly, if a word’s capitalization is ambiguous, I have followed conventional upper- or lowercase usage. I have incorporated authors’ interlineations and cancellations into the texts without comment, except where an explanation or the retention of struck-out text (in brackets) is necessary for readers’ comprehension. Unintentional consecutive word repetitions have been omitted.

I have transcribed short dashes on the base of the line as commas or periods where the authors used them as such. I have ignored redundant punctuation and meaningless flourishes or ink marks. I have brought superscripts down to the line and transcribed markings beneath or beside superscripts as periods. I have omitted punctuation following the abbreviations “st,” “nd,” “rd,” and “th”; punctuation after “s” if an author used it with every plural noun; and punctuation after a letter’s date or signature. I have replaced colons used to end abbreviations and flourishes under middle initials with periods. I have standardized quo-

tation marks, using double marks for a quotation and single marks for a quotation within a quotation, and have placed periods and commas before closing quotation marks. I have replaced nonstandard punctuation (such as a comma below a dash) with the most similar punctuation available that retains the author's meaning. Underlined text is represented by italics.

Regardless of their position in the manuscript, I have set a letter's salutation and its place and date of composition on one line (or more if necessary) immediately below the letter's heading. In a letter written over two days, the second date appears at its place in the manuscript. Except in rare cases where they are particularly illuminating, I have omitted complimentary closings; an ellipsis at the end of a letter indicates a closing that either appears in the manuscript's final paragraph or, though positioned separately, continues the final sentence of that paragraph. I have rendered each author's signature in capitals and small capitals on its own line, but have placed the signature to a postscript in upper- and lower-case letters at the end of the last paragraph of the postscript. I have omitted professional titles that follow signatures. I have set each postscript at the end of its letter; a note indicates if it appears elsewhere in the manuscript.

Most of my transcriptions and summaries of correspondence are based on extant letters held in archives or private collections. In rare cases, they derive from archival transcriptions, from publications of letters, or from original manuscripts of which the project has obtained copies but whose current locations are unknown or which have been destroyed. A few calendar summaries for letters whose current locations are unknown are based on summaries, transcriptions, or manuscript images located in auction listings or dealers' catalogs whose provenance, to the extent possible, has been verified. For the one letter in this volume originally written in a language besides English, I have transcribed the translation that Polk received with it. Dakota-language expert Laura L. Anderson has confirmed its accuracy; notes indicate differences between the Dakota and English manuscripts.

Each letter's headnote or calendar entry includes the physical description and location of the version transcribed or summarized, along with identifications of other known extant versions or publications of the letter. I have noted the city or other location to which a published or briefed letter was addressed, whether written inside the letter or on its cover—the envelope if one was used or the exterior of the folded letter if one was not—in the headnote; I have noted probable addresses for letters whose covers are missing. Also in the headnote, I have included information from the recipient's or another's endorsement if it adds

to readers' understanding of the letter (Polk and his secretaries often summarized letters on their covers, but I generally have not included those summaries). I have quoted, in the headnote, the author's notation of "private" or other such stipulation; this text is from the top of the letter unless otherwise indicated. I have included delivery information such as the names of couriers, but mentioned postmarks only if they reveal significant information such as a delay in mailing or the route of an international letter.

Brackets within a letter indicate text that I have inserted to complete a probable meaning, text whose transcription is uncertain, cancelled text that I have retained, or text that I have transcribed from a different version of the letter. A note indicates the nature of the bracketed text. The letters include many errors and unconventional spellings; bracketed text to complete meanings, or notes with corrected spellings, have been inserted only where confusion is likely otherwise. Bracketed ellipses indicate text that is illegible—usually owing to damage, archival tape, or poor ink transfer in Polk's copy press (a note indicates the problem)—or the missing portion of a letter fragment. Brackets also surround supplied places or dates of composition (if omitted from or incorrectly stated in a manuscript), supplied signatures (if omitted from or cut out of a manuscript), and supplied postscript headings. They surround supplied dates or correspondents' names in the calendar.

In crafting this volume's annotation, I have consulted numerous primary and secondary sources. These include many well-known reference books and monographs. To ensure accuracy, I have confirmed all information in the notes, including that which appears in earlier volumes of this series. Only facts for which I have at least one reliable primary source or two reliable secondary sources have been included. (In very rare cases, information found in a single secondary source has been mentioned and cited; see below for a more general exception to the sourcing rule). Owing to these considerations and pursuant to my desire that the notes not overwhelm the letters, I have foregone the naming of sources in the notes. I have, however, identified publications (including federal documents and laws) mentioned or quoted in the various texts and directed readers to outside sources of particular relevance. Polk's diary and his annual messages to Congress are mentioned throughout this volume; they can be found in editions edited, respectively, by Milo Milton Quaife and James D. Richardson.² References in letters to Polk's "Message," if not further specified, mean his Third Annual Message to Congress, which he submitted on December 7, 1847. U.S. treaties discussed herein can be found in volumes 8 and 9 of the federal govern-

ment's *Statutes at Large* and volume 2 of Charles J. Kappler's *Indian Affairs. Laws and Treaties*.³

Letters often refer to other letters to or from Polk. In general, readers may find such letters in this series. I have noted if a mentioned letter has not been found. If an author refers to a letter in this series without giving the correspondent and date, I have supplied that information.

I have identified in notes, with archival locations, all documents enclosed within letters published or briefed in this volume. Notes also indicate enclosures mentioned in the correspondence that have not been found. Calendar entries mention enclosures but indicate in parentheses only if an enclosure has not been found or appears in a different repository from its letter's; otherwise readers may assume an enclosure is with its indicated letter. In each relevant case, as part of the description and location that I provide for every letter, I have noted if the letter is itself an enclosure. I have omitted notes for enclosed objects; these have not been found.

In this volume I have preserved the policy changes made in Volume 12 regarding identifications of people. Each identifying note now includes, immediately following the person's name, the years of birth and death. The absence of such dates indicates that research yielded none. (As in earlier volumes, the notes otherwise include biographical information only up to Polk's death in 1849 unless later activities are particularly important or are the only information known about a person.) Drawing on William Dusing's *Slavemaster President: The Double Career of James Polk*,⁴ I have included more biographical information about Polk's African American slaves than appears in the first eleven volumes. I have confirmed and supplemented Dusing's findings through primary research whenever possible, but have included his information even in instances where he remains the only source. This exception to the usual sourcing protocols owes to the pertinence of information on Polk's slaves and the scarcity of relevant sources.

The calendar now includes very brief identifications of people who appear there for the first time in the volume. In the rare situation where I have found no information about a person, whether in the main body or in the calendar, or about another subject or a quotation in the main body, I have simply omitted the identification without mentioning its absence.

This volume includes fewer cross references than those before Volume 12. In most cases, instead of relying on cross references, readers can locate additional letters and notes on a topic by referring to the index. I have included cross references where other letters are

particularly vital and the index may not immediately direct readers to them. Finally, for the first time, Volume 13's index includes the places where published or briefed letters were written.

MICHAEL DAVID COHEN

1. The volumes of those series covering the months included in this volume are James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1897), and John Bassett Moore, ed., *The Works of James Buchanan: Comprising His Speeches, State Papers, and Private Correspondence*, vols. 7–8 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1909).

2. Milo Milton Quaife, ed., *The Diary of James K. Polk during His Presidency, 1845 to 1849*, 4 vols. (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1910); Richardson, *Compilation of the Messages and Papers*, pp. 385–416, 471–506, 532–64, 629–70.

3. Senate Document No. 452, 57th Congress, 1st Session.

4. William Dusinberre, *Slavemaster President: The Double Career of James Polk* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003).

SYMBOLS

Document Classifications

AD	Autograph Document
AD, copy of draft	Autograph Document, draft copied by writer
AD, draft	Autograph Document, drafted by writer
AD, fragment of copy	Autograph Document, copied by writer, fragment
AD, press copy	Autograph Document, press copy
ADS	Autograph Document Signed
AE	Autograph Endorsement
AEI	Autograph Endorsement Initialed
AES	Autograph Endorsement Signed
AEs	Autograph Endorsements
AEsI	Autograph Endorsements Initialed
AL	Autograph Letter
AL, draft	Autograph Letter, drafted by writer
AL, draft of postscript	Autograph Letter, drafted by writer, postscript only
ALI	Autograph Letter Initialed
ALS	Autograph Letter Signed
ALS, copy	Autograph Letter Signed, copied by writer
ALS, draft	Autograph Letter Signed, drafted by writer
ALS, duplicate	Autograph Letter Signed, duplicated by writer
ALS, photocopy	Autograph Letter Signed, photocopy
ALS, press copy	Autograph Letter Signed, press copy
ALsS	Autograph Letters Signed
ALsS, press copies	Autograph Letters Signed, press copies
AN	Autograph Note

AN, draft	Autograph Note, drafted by writer
AN, fragment of draft	Autograph Note, drafted by writer, fragment
AN, press copy	Autograph Note, press copy
ANI	Autograph Note Initialed
ANS	Autograph Note Signed
D	Document, authorship attributed or unknown
D, copy	Document, copy
D, draft	Document, draft
DS	Document Signed
E	Endorsement, authorship attributed or unknown
Es	Endorsements
Es, typed copies	Endorsements, typed copies
L	Letter, authorship attributed or unknown
L, copy	Letter, copy
L, translation	Letter, English translation
L, typed copy	Letter, typed copy
LS	Letter Signed
LS, copy	Letter Signed, copy
LS, duplicate	Letter Signed, duplicate
Ls, copies	Letters, copies
N	Note, authorship attributed or unknown
N, copy	Note, copy
N, probably copy	Note, probably copy
NS	Note Signed
PC	Published Circular, authorship attributed or unknown
PDS	Published Document Signed
PDs	Published Documents, authorship attributed or unknown
PL	Published Letter, authorship attributed or unknown
PLs	Published Letters
PNS	Published Note Signed
Partly printed DS	Partly printed Document Signed
Partly printed N	Partly printed Note, authorship attributed or unknown
Partly printed N, telegram	Partly printed Note, telegram

Repository Designations

CtY	Yale University, New Haven, Conn.
DLC-EB	Library of Congress, Edmund Burke Papers
DLC-GW	Library of Congress, Gideon Welles Papers
DLC-JHH	Library of Congress, James H. Hammond Papers
DLC-JKP	Library of Congress, James K. Polk Papers
DLC-MVB	Library of Congress, Martin Van Buren Papers
DLC-SC	Library of Congress, Simon Cameron Papers
DLC-WWC	Library of Congress, William W. Corcoran Papers
DNA-RG 45	National Archives, Naval Records Collection of the Office of Naval Records and Library
DNA-RG 46	National Archives, Records of the United States Senate
DNA-RG 48	National Archives, Records of the Office of the Secretary of the Interior
DNA-RG 56	National Archives, General Records of the Department of the Treasury
DNA-RG 59	National Archives, General Records of the Department of State
DNA-RG 60	National Archives, General Records of the Department of Justice
DNA-RG 75	National Archives, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs
DNA-RG 76	National Archives, Records of Boundary and Claims Commissions and Arbitrations
DNA-RG 92	National Archives, Records of the Office of the Quartermaster General
DNA-RG 94	National Archives, Records of the Adjutant General's Office
DNA-RG 107	National Archives, Records of the Office of the Secretary of War
DNA-RG 127	National Archives, Records of the United States Marine Corps
DNA-RG 156	National Archives, Records of the Office of the Chief of Ordnance

DSI–NAA	Smithsonian Institution, National Anthropological Archives
HHi	Hawaiian Historical Society, Honolulu
IHi	Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, Springfield, Ill.
InHi	Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis
InU–Li	Indiana University, Bloomington, Lilly Library
KyLoF	Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Ky.
MB	Boston Public Library
MBU–ECS	Boston University, Edward C. Stone Collection
MH–H	Harvard University, Houghton Library, Cambridge, Mass.
MHi	Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston
MdHi–HA	Maryland Historical Society, Horowitz Autograph Collection, Baltimore
MeHi	Maine Historical Society, Portland
MiU–C	University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, William L. Clements Library
MoSHi–L	Missouri History Museum, Lindenwood Collection, St. Louis
Ms–AR	Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson
NBLiHi	Brooklyn Historical Society, N.Y.
Nc–Ar	North Carolina Office of Archives and History, Raleigh
NhD	Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H.
NjR	Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick
PHi	Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia
T–VWA	Tennessee State Library and Archives, Virginia Wood Alexander Genealogical Collection, Nashville
T–WRC	Tennessee State Library and Archives, Whiteford R. Cole Collection, Nashville
TU	University of Tennessee, Knoxville
Tx	Texas State Library and Archives Commission, Austin
TxHR–JD	Rice University, Fondren Library, Papers of Jefferson Davis, Houston

ViHi–MF Virginia Historical Society, Mason Family Papers, 1805–86, Richmond

Published Sources

- AL* Emanuel Hertz, *Abraham Lincoln: A New Portrait*, vol. 2 (New York: Horace Liveright, 1931)
- BPHO* J. Henry Brown, *Brown's Political History of Oregon: Provisional Government*, vol. 1 (Portland, Ore.: Lewis & Dryden Printing Co., 1892)
- CMPP–1* James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1897)
- CMPP–4* James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, vol. 4 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1897)
- CWAL* Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, vol. 1 (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1953)
- EJCF* Mary Lee Spence and Donald Jackson, eds., *The Expeditions of John Charles Frémont*, vol. 2, *The Bear Flag Revolt and the Court-Martial* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1973)
- LLGB* M. A. DeWolfe Howe, *The Life and Letters of George Bancroft*, vol. 2 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908)
- NLPL* Paul M. Angle, comp., *New Letters and Papers of Lincoln* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1930)
- PDNC* *The Proceedings of the Democratic National Convention, Held at Baltimore, May 22, 1848* (Washington, D.C.: Blair & Rives, [1848])
- PUSG* John Y. Simon, ed., *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*, vol. 1, 1837–1861 (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1967)
- SL* *Statutes at Large*

- ULNCP–Ju Elizabeth Gregory McPherson, ed.,
“Unpublished Letters from North
Carolinians to Polk,” *North Carolina
Historical Review*, 17 (July 1940)
- WJB–7 John Bassett Moore, ed., *The Works
of James Buchanan: Comprising
His Speeches, State Papers, and
Private Correspondence*, vol. 7,
1846–1848 (Philadelphia: J. B.
Lippincott Co., 1909)
- WJB–8 John Bassett Moore, ed., *The Works
of James Buchanan: Comprising
His Speeches, State Papers, and
Private Correspondence*, vol. 8,
1848–1853 (Philadelphia: J. B.
Lippincott Co., 1909)

CHRONOLOGY

- 1795 Nov. 2 Born in Mecklenburg County, N.C.
1806 Fall Moved to Williamson County, Tenn. (Dec. 1807,
area became Maury County)
1812 Fall Underwent major surgery by Dr. Ephraim
McDowell in Danville, Ky.
1813 July Began study under Robert Henderson at Zion
Church Academy
1816 Jan. Entered University of North Carolina as
sophomore
1818 June Graduated from University of North Carolina
Fall Began reading law in office of Felix Grundy of
Nashville
1819 Sept. Elected clerk of Tennessee Senate
1820 June Admitted to the bar
1823 Aug. Elected to Tennessee House
1824 Jan. 1 Married Sarah Childress of Murfreesboro
1825 Aug. Elected to U.S. House
1827 Aug. Reelected to U.S. House
Nov. 5 Death of his father, Samuel Polk
1829 Aug. Reelected to U.S. House
1831 Jan. 21 Death of his brother Franklin E., aged 28
Apr. 12 Death of his brother Marshall T., aged 26
Aug. Reelected to U.S. House
Sept. 28 Death of his brother John L., aged 24
1831 Winter Sent slaves to clear land for his Fayette County,
-32 Tenn., plantation
1833 Aug. Reelected to U.S. House
Dec. Chosen to chair U.S. House Committee on Ways
and Means

-
- 1834 June Defeated by John Bell for Speaker of the
U.S. House
Fall Sold Fayette County plantation and purchased,
Miss., with Silas M. Caldwell, Yalobusha County,
plantation
- 1835 Aug. Reelected to U.S. House
Dec. 7 Elected Speaker of the U.S. House
- 1836 Aug. 6 Death of his sister Naomi Tate, wife of Adlai O.
Harris, aged 27
- 1837 Aug. Reelected to U.S. House
Sept. 4 Reelected Speaker of the U.S. House
- 1839 Feb. 24 Death of his brother Samuel Washington, aged 21
Aug. Elected governor of Tennessee over Newton
Cannon
- 1840 May Withdrew candidacy for Democratic
vice-presidential nomination
- 1841 Aug. Defeated in gubernatorial election by
James C. Jones
- 1843 Aug. Defeated in gubernatorial election by
James C. Jones
Nov. Recommended by Tennessee Democratic
State Convention to be party's 1844
vice-presidential nominee
- 1844 May 29 Nominated for presidency by Democratic
National Convention
Nov. Elected president of the United States over
Henry Clay
- 1845 Mar. 4 Inaugurated president of the United States
- 1846 Apr. 25 Start of Mexican War
June 15 Signing of Buchanan-Pakenham (Oregon) Treaty
July 30 Signed Walker Tariff bill
Aug. 3 Vetoed Harbors and Rivers Appropriation
Bill of 1846
Aug. 6 Signed Independent Treasury bill
Oct. Purchased the late Felix Grundy's home in
Nashville
- 1847 Dec. 15 Submitted reasons for not signing Harbors and
Rivers Appropriation Bill of 1847
- 1848 Feb. 2 Signing of Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, ending
Mexican War
- 1849 Mar. 4–5 Yielded office to his successor, Zachary Taylor
June 15 Died in Nashville, likely of cholera

Correspondence of James K. Polk

VOLUME XIII, AUGUST 1847–MARCH 1848

AUGUST 1847

FROM SHAH COPEE ET AL.¹

To The President of the United States— [Mendota]²
[c. August 1847]³

The prayer of his children the Chiefs and Braves of the Mindaywakanton Bands of Sioux Indians⁴ of the Mississippi and St. Peters Rivers,⁵ respectfully & humbly represents: That in the month of May last, seven men of our bands were persuaded to join a war party consisting in all of twenty eight men who left the Cannon River, about forty miles from St. Peters,⁶ with the avowed intention of striking a blow upon a party of Sacs and Foxes⁷ who had previously treacherously killed one of the best and most esteemed young man of the Mindaywakanton Sioux. Fearing that some mistake might be made, and friends killed or injured in stead of enemies, the war party sent a message to the Winnebagoes⁸ through their principal traders,⁹ that they desired the latter tribe to withdraw for a time, to the eastward of the Red Cedar River,¹⁰ as no injury was intended to their persons or property. This message was delivered, and most of the Winnebagoes did withdraw, as requested by the Sioux war party. Unfortunately a few remained behind, and when the war party reached the point, where it was supposed the Sacs & Foxes who had murdered their friend would be found, they fell in with two lodges, which they attacked, and before they had discovered their error, nine Winnebagoes were killed. This is the account given by all of those who participated in the affair, and we believe it to be true, as the Sioux have had no cause of hostility towards the Winnebagoes, and have hitherto lived on friendly terms with them. As soon as we

your petitioners, the Chiefs and Braves of the Mindaywakanton Sioux, learned that so unfortunate a blow had been struck, we lost no time in assembling in Council, in order to avert from the heads of our tribe if possible, the indignation of our Great Father at Washington. We were willing to do any thing reasonable that might be demanded of us, in order to accomodate this unfortunate affair, and with this view, several of us went a long distance from our homes, with the hope & expectation of meeting the Winnebagoes on their own ground, of convincing them that we deeply deplored the occurrence which had resulted in the death of our friends, and making such an arrangement with the relatives of the deceased, as our limited means would allow. Judge of our surprise, when our friendly overtures were rejected unless we would allow ourselves to be disarmed, and conducted into the Winnebago camp. To this indignity we even submitted for the sake of peace, but were shocked to find among the Winnebagoes assembled, many of the Sacs & Foxes and Potawatamies,¹¹ our mortal enemies, the latter tribe just arrived, having in their possession the scalps of two of our Nation, which scalps were very properly taken from them by the United States Agent at Fort Atkinson.¹² When assembled in Council, we explained to the Winnebagoes, that we had been sent by the Sioux of our bands to make an ample apology for what had been done, and to assure them the Winnebagoes that we desired to live in amity with them, and that in order to conciliate the friends of the deceased, we were commissioned to offer the relatives such payment as our poverty would permit. We were abused & threatened, and finally forced to sign a paper, in which it was stipulated that we should pay out of our poor annuity, (of \$10,000.) five thousand dollars, that is to say four thousand dollars in money, and one thousand dollars worth of horses.¹³ We now approach you to protest against this paper, its inception and object, and to ask you, Our Great Father, to withhold your sanction from it. Blood cannot be paid for in money, and we cannot bring to life the dead, by a sacrifice of a large portion of the only resources left us against suffering & starvation, however willingly we might do so, could the object be effected. We are now by your order, as our Agent¹⁴ informs us, to receive neither provisions, money nor goods until we consent to such terms as the Winnebagoes may dictate. Our families are literally starving because a few young men allied to us by blood have acted imprudently or criminally. We pray you to put an end to this miserable state of things, and to order the Agent to deliver to us our annuities as usual. If you our Great Father, are of opinion that the sum of five thousand dollars is not excessive, we pray you to order the sum to be paid out of the monies belonging to us, still in the hands of the Government.¹⁵ By our treaty of

September 29th 1837 it was stipulated, that five thousand dollars of our specie payment should be retained in the hands of the President to be expended *annually* as he should direct, for our benefit. Ten years have elapsed and not a dollar have we received of what is our own, although we have repeatedly asked that we might receive it in money. Last winter our principal trader was assured by the Commissioner,¹⁶ that the large amount due should be paid so soon as the accounts could be arranged. We think he has had sufficient time for that purpose, and earnestly pray that you will order the amount to be paid us in specie, less the amount that you, Our Great Father, may choose to retain for the payment of the Winnebagoes. The five thousand dollars due us annually since 1837, has been appropriated annually by Congress,¹⁷ and sent to the Indian Agent at Saint Peters, but he has received no orders to pay it out, and we are suffering from want in consequence of this omission.

Your petitioners, the Chiefs and Braves, further earnestly and respectfully ask you our Great Father for a redress of grievances some of which we will briefly state. The treaty stipulations with our bands are either not attended to, or are fulfilled in a slovenly and unsatisfactory manner, so that they do not render us comfortable as might be expected. The goods sent us are, many of them, of a kind we cannot use, and those articles most necessary for ourselves & families are sent in insufficient quantities.

Our money is liberally expended in the yearly payment of farmers & blacksmiths, and we derive no corresponding benefit from their labors, especially of the blacksmiths. These latter do our work occasionally, when it pleases them, but usually it is left undone.

We have treaties of peace with the Chippewas¹⁸ & Winnebagoes, but two years ago a Sioux was way-laid and murdered by Chippewas, and we have had no satisfaction, although the sanctity of these treaties is guarantied by the Government.¹⁹ The Sioux referred to was killed on the Military Reserve of Fort Snelling, within a mile of the garrison. Several years since, Col. Snelling then Commandant of this post²⁰ seized four Sioux, and delivered them over to the Chippewas, by whom they were brutally murdered before the eyes of the soldiers, and their bodies treated with every indignity.²¹ The offence committed was the discharge of fire arms into a Chippewa lodge whereby two individuals were wounded but none killed. Two or three years ago, a Sioux belonging not to our bands but to a different tribe killed a Chippewa, and simply because the Sioux was allowed to draw annuities with us, our largest village was deprived of one half the goods due it, which were paid over to the Chippewas.²² Even now the Winnebagoes harbor among them Potawatamies and vagabond Sacs & Foxes, who are our

declared & deadly enemies, and whose legitimate home is far from the Mississippi. We have no advocate in Washington to detail our wrongs to you, our Great Father, and we know you are kept in ignorance of our miserable & persecuted condition. We are punished for every fault, but our enemies may kill and scalp us at leisure, for they know that we have no one to protect us. We need not say to you Our Father, that we suffer these inflictions from no fear of the surrounding tribes of red men. Our glory & delight is in war, which is our *natural* state, and we are only kept at peace with our hereditary enemies because you have told us that you wished us to abstain from war. In conclusion, we ask you, our Great Father, to protect us and treat us as your children, and if we are compelled to pay the Winnebagoes for the late bad affair we hope that you will order the Agent of the Sacs and Foxes,²³ which tribes were the cause of it, to pay over to us from their annuities²⁴ an equal sum for having killed our young man, as before stated. And your petitioners the undersigned Chiefs and Braves pray you to re-inforce the garrison at Fort Snelling, so that the Commanding Officer²⁵ who is well disposed towards us, may be enabled to send a detachment and seize those individuals of other tribes who may kill our people, which he cannot now do in consequence of the limited number of men in garrison, and we promise to do all we can on our part to keep peace among the different tribes of Indians. We wish you to keep the Chippewas from our hunting grounds, where they live constantly, notwithstanding the terms of the treaty of peace. Their being there, is the cause of all our trouble with them.

Your Petitioners, the undersigned Chiefs and Braves of the Mindaywakanton Sioux hereby assure you, our Great Father, of our attachment to you and the American Government, and we are always desirous of pleasing you, and living on friendly terms with the whites. We hope you will listen to our prayers.

HIS
SHAH X COPEE
MARK

NS in Henry H. Sibley's hand. DNA-RG 75. To the left of the signatures: "Signed, after being read & fully explained and interpreted, in presence of/ H. H. Sibley/J Ba. Faribault/Alex Faribault/Wm Henry Forbes."²⁶ From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received August 13, 1847. Polk's AEI: "Referred to the commissioner of Indian affairs; Augt. 16th 1847; J.K.P." E in an unknown hand: "Civilization." From John C. Mullay's²⁷ AE: received August 16, 1847; "St. Peters' Agency."

1. Letter bears the names, in Henry H. Sibley's hand, and the marks of twenty-seven Mdewakanton Dakotas, including seven chiefs: Shah copee,

Ah no ke nan gee, Ta Chonke wash tay, Muz zah hotah, Wechonkpee, Muck a pee we chash tah, and W'ah-coo-ta. Shah copee (or Shakopee, or Šakpe, "Six") (1770s–1860) was the second of three chiefs by that name of Shah copee's band, the largest Mdewakanton band. It was based at Tirta Otoŋwe (Village of the Prairie), on the Minnesota River, where whites founded the town of Shakopee, Minn., in the 1850s. Shah copee's father was executed by the Chippewa in 1827; according to cartographer Joseph H. Nicollet, who visited Tirta Otoŋwe in 1838, the band elected the son chief in 1837. He was highly regarded as an orator. Ah no ke nan gee (or Annon-ge-nasiah, or An-nó-je-nahge, "Stands Astride"), Shah copee's brother, was second chief, or head soldier, of the same band. In 1835 he accompanied U.S. government surveyors drawing the Dakota-Chippewa border. He was among the signers of the Dakota-U.S. treaty of 1837 and, identified as "a Distinguished Ball Player," was the subject of an 1835 painting by George Catlin. Ta Chonke wash tay (or Tah-chunk-wash-taa, or Taçaŋku Wašte, "His Good Road" or "Good Road") (1780s or 1790s?–1852?) became chief of the Penichon, or Good Road's band, based at Titaŋka Taŋnina (The Old Village), about nine miles up the Minnesota from Fort Snelling, in 1833. He signed 1830 and 1837 treaties with the United States; he was arrested briefly in 1844 after offending the commandant of Fort Snelling. Muz zah hotah (or Mazarota, or Maza Ĥota, "Grey Iron") (c. 1809?–1857), also known as Pa-wa-ya-zan (My Head Aches), was chief of the Maġa YuřeŠni, or Black Dog's band, named for his grandfather. Their home, Hohaanskae (The Village of the Long Avenue) was the closest village to Fort Snelling, about four miles up the Minnesota. Muz zah hotah signed the 1830 and 1837 treaties. Wechonkpee (or Wee-tchan-h'pee, "The Star") was a chief or headman of the Lake Calhoun band. After all seven of these chiefs signed a treaty with the U.S. government in 1851, five testified to U.S. commissioners about months of nonpayment of annuities and the imprisonment of five Mdewakanton men, including Wechonkpee's son, at Fort Snelling, for killing Chippewas. Muck a pee we chash tah (or Mah-piya Wičašta, or Marpiya-wichashta, "Cloud Man" or "Man of the Sky") (c. 1780 or c. 1794–1863) belonged to Black Dog's band until 1829, when, after being caught in a blizzard on a buffalo-hunting trip, he formed a new band at Ĥeyate Otoŋwe (The Village at the Side), or Eatonville, between Lakes Calhoun and Harriet, and transitioned from hunting and gathering to diversified agriculture. U.S. Indian agent Lawrence Taliaferro, father of one of his granddaughters, supported the endeavor; the U.S. government provided supplies. Missionaries came to the village and the new chief seems, to some extent, to have embraced Christianity. In 1839, at war with the Chippewa and fearing an attack, the group relocated to Oak Grove, about six miles up the Minnesota from Fort Snelling, but remained known as the Lake Calhoun band, with Muck a pee we chash tah as a chief. Early on a war chief, he was a member of the Mdewakanton treaty delegation in 1837. W'ah-coo-ta (or Wacouta, or Wakute, "Shooter") (c. 1800?–c. 1858?) was elected chief of Red Wing's band in 1829, succeeding the band's namesake, whom sources describe as his uncle, father, or stepfather. In 1832, amid a dispute between W'ah-coo-ta and another would-be chief, the band split into two villages; by the end of the decade, though, all were again at the original

village of He Mni Čarj (Hill Water Wood), on Lake Pepin. Inclined toward peace, W'ah-coo-ta maintained good relationships with missionaries, sent his children to mission schools, and signed treaties with the United States in 1830 and 1837. The 1837 experience, however, left him bitter toward the U.S. government. Sibley identifies thirteen other signers of this letter as principal soldiers of Good Road's or Black Dog's band or soldiers of the Lake Calhoun band. Henry H. Sibley (1811–91), born in Detroit and trained as a lawyer, became an Indian trader with the American Fur Company in 1829. In 1834 he became principal trader with the Dakota, based at Mendota (across the Minnesota River from Fort Snelling), a post he filled until the 1850s. He served as delegate to Congress from Wisconsin Territory, 1848–49, and from Minnesota Territory, 1849–53, and later as the first governor of the state of Minnesota, 1858–60.

2. Probable place identified through content analysis. Located just west of the Mississippi River in then-unorganized territory and present-day Minnesota, Mendota served as the regional headquarters of the American Fur Company.

3. Approximate date identified from Joseph Knox Walker's AE and through content analysis.

4. The Sioux, or Očeti Šakowin, are a group of Native American peoples in the north-central United States with a common history and language family. Their most eastern division, the Dakota or Santee, by the eighteenth century lived along the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers in today's southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. An 1837 treaty ceded their land east of the Mississippi. The Dakota consist of four subdivisions: the Mdewakanton, Sisseton, Wahpekute, and Wahpeton. This letter's authors belonged to at least five bands of Mdewakanton.

5. Until Congress officially changed its name in 1852, the Minnesota River was also called the St. Peter's River.

6. The War Department's Indian Department operated numerous agencies to oversee relations between whites and Native Americans and among the various Indian peoples. The St. Peter's Agency, established in 1820 at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers within the garrison later named Fort Snelling and subsequently moved to nearby facilities, originally served both the Sioux and the Chippewa in the area. In 1827 the Chippewa were reassigned to the Sault Ste. Marie Agency, though they continued to visit the much closer St. Peter's. The agents there encouraged the Indians to adopt European cultural elements, such as agriculture (versus hunting), Christianity, and a new gendered division of labor.

7. The Sac, or Thakiwaki, and Fox, or Meskwaki, are related Indian peoples of the Algonquin language group. They lived primarily in Iowa Territory from 1829 until the 1840s. Following an 1842 treaty in which they ceded their land there, the U.S. government in 1845 began the decades-long process of removing them to unorganized territory that became Kansas.

8. The Winnebago, or Ho-Chunk, were removed from Wisconsin Territory to Iowa Territory in the early 1840s. By a treaty signed in 1846, they were removed in 1848 to a new reservation on the Long Prairie River in unorganized territory that, the next year, became part of Minnesota Territory.

9. Sibley was principal trader with the Dakota; Henry M. Rice, with the Winnebago. Born in Vermont, Rice (1816–94) was a surveyor in Michigan Territory before becoming attaché of the sutler's department at Fort Snelling, 1839–40, and sutler at Fort Atkinson, Iowa Terr., 1840–42. In 1842 he took charge of the fur trade with the Winnebago, setting up posts from Lake Superior to the Red River of the North; joining the American Fur Company in 1847, he moved to Mendota and traded with the Winnebago and the Chippewa. In 1846 he served as a delegate for the Winnebago to negotiate their treaty; in August 1847, as a U.S. commissioner, he negotiated two treaties by which the Chippewa ceded land on which to relocate the Winnebago and Menominee. A Democrat, he later served as delegate to Congress from Minnesota Territory, 1853–57, and U.S. senator from the state of Minnesota, 1858–63.

10. Shah copee et al. refer to the Cedar River of Iowa and present-day Minnesota, sometimes called the Red Cedar River, not to the Red Cedar River of Wisconsin Territory.

11. The Potawatomi, or Bodewadmi, are an Algonquin people who lived in the region surrounding Lake Michigan before removal. After a series of treaties, the U.S. government removed them to Iowa and today's Kansas in the 1830s and 1840s, though some remained behind.

12. The army established Fort Atkinson, on the Turkey River in northeastern Iowa Territory, in 1840 as part of its effort to remove the Winnebago from Wisconsin Territory into Iowa Territory, as well as to protect the Winnebago from rival Indians, such as the Dakota, and from encroaching whites. The same year the U.S. government established the Turkey River Sub-agency, four miles from the fort, to serve the Winnebago. That sub-agency closed in 1848 when the Winnebago were removed to the Long Prairie River. The fort closed in 1849. Jonathan E. Fletcher (1806–72), a Vermont native, lived in Ohio before moving to and buying farmland in Iowa Territory in 1838. A member of Iowa's constitutional convention of 1844, he served as U.S. agent for the Winnebago, at the Turkey River, 1845–48, and subsequently held similar posts in Wisconsin and Minnesota Territories.

13. In September 1837, having been brought to Washington City on other pretenses, delegates for the Mdewakanton signed a treaty to “cede to the United States all their land, east of the Mississippi river, and all their islands in the said river.” In return, the United States promised them both one-time payments—\$90,000 toward their debts, up to \$10,000 in agricultural and miscellaneous goods, \$6,000 “in goods” for the signers, and \$110,000 for people of at least one-fourth “Sioux blood”—and a series of annual payments. The latter included three twenty-year annuities—\$10,000 “in goods”; \$5,500 in “provisions”; and \$8,250 in “medicines, agricultural implements and stock, and for the support of a physician, farmers, and blacksmiths, and for other beneficial objects”—and annual interest payments on a \$300,000 investment, at least two-thirds of that to be paid in money or requested goods and the rest “to be applied in such manner as the President may direct.”

14. Amos J. Bruce (c. 1796–1855), a Virginia native and a War of 1812 veteran, served as a Washington County, Mo., judge, 1830–38, and postmaster at

Potosi, Mo., 1832–36. A Democrat, he was U.S. agent for the Sioux, at St. Peter's, 1840–48, then became a Missouri farmer.

15. The U.S. government initially withheld the Mdewakanton's annuities pending their settling the dispute with the Winnebago. On September 4, 1847, William Medill ordered the payment of the in-kind annuity, due to illness among the Mdewakanton, and the payment of the cash, minus \$4,000 reserved for the Winnebago, once they accepted the reparation agreement—which they do in this letter.

16. Delaware native and Lancaster, Ohio, lawyer William Medill (1802–65) served in the Ohio House, 1835–38, and the U.S. House, 1839–43. A Democrat by 1840, he was appointed by Polk second assistant postmaster general in 1845 and commissioner of Indian affairs the same year; he held the latter post until 1849. He later became Ohio governor, 1853–55.

17. Polk most recently had signed such an act on March 1, 1847. "An Act making Appropriations for the current and contingent Expenses of the Indian Department, and for fulfilling Treaty Stipulations with the various Indian Tribes, for the year ending June thirtieth, eighteen hundred and forty-eight." *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 31.

18. The Chippewa, Ojibwe, or Anishinaabeg are speakers of an Algonquin language. After a centuries-long migration westward, in the early nineteenth century they lived in present-day Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota, and Montana, as well as in Canada. They ceded land to the United States through a series of treaties beginning in 1808, but remained on the extensive lands in Michigan and Wisconsin Territory officially ceded in treaties of 1837 and 1842.

19. The Sioux and Chippewa had made peace treaties since the eighteenth century, with such negotiations becoming frequent in the 1820s. Most recently, the Dakota and Chippewa had agreed to peace in 1843; this treaty entitled attacked parties to collect reparations from the offenders' future annuities (a provision that, among the Dakota, affected only the Mdewakanton). In 1825 U.S. officials Lewis Cass and William Clark hosted treaty negotiations at Prairie du Chien, Mich. Terr., among Indian peoples including the Dakota, Chippewa, Winnebago, Sac, Fox, and Potawatomi. The resulting peace treaty established boundaries among these groups and authorized both the U.S. government and the other Indian peoples to settle any future conflicts between parties to the treaty. The boundaries, however, were not surveyed until 1835, and violence continued, particularly between the Dakota and Chippewa.

20. Josiah Snelling (1782–1828), born in Boston, served in the army from 1808 until his death. He commanded troops in the suppression of Tecumseh's rebellion and the subsequent War of 1812. He was assigned in 1820 to a garrison at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers, established the year before to protect frontier whites (including fur traders) and keep peace among the Indians. Over the next four years he oversaw the construction of Fort St. Anthony there. Colonel Snelling remained commandant of the fort—which the War Department renamed Fort Snelling in 1825—until 1827.

21. On May 28, 1827, Dakota warriors attacked Chippewas, with whom they had just dined, outside Fort Snelling. Two eventually died. The commandant imprisoned a group of Dakotas and turned over four to the Chippewa, whom the latter executed, two on May 29 and two on May 30. The Chippewa allowed the men to try to run to safety, then shot them and scalped them in view of the fort. At least one of the executed men, according to some sources, belonged to Shah copee's band.

22. In mid-March 1844, four Wahpeton-born men who had been living as part of Shah copee's band for four years killed a Chippewa while he was hunting on the Sauk River or one of its tributaries. Their victim was probably Babiizigindibens (or Bebiizigindibe, or Pay pe si gon de bay, "Curly Head"), who was indeed killed by Dakotas that month. Following the previous year's treaty, Agent Bruce refused to award annuities until Shah copee's band had made reparations. Shah copee sent men to capture the murderers and, by mid-June, his band and the Chippewa had resolved the matter at a meeting facilitated by Bruce. Babiizigindibens (?–1844), a chief of the Gull Lake band of Chippewa, had signed a treaty between the Chippewa and the United States in 1842.

23. Massachusetts native John Beach (1812–74), an 1832 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, served in the army, 1832–38 and 1861–66. As U.S. agent for the Sac and Fox, 1840–47 (until 1843 west of Fairfield, Iowa Terr., and thereafter near Fort Des Moines at the mouth of the Raccoon River), he hosted the negotiation of their 1842 treaty with the United States. He afterwards remained in Iowa as a farmer and merchant.

24. A series of treaties signed between 1804 and 1842 promised annuities for the Sac and Fox from the U.S. government.

25. Maine native Seth Eastman (1808–75) graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1829 and served in the army until 1863. While posted at Fort Snelling, 1830–31, he married a Dakota woman; he abandoned her and their daughter when he left. He taught drawing at the U.S. Military Academy, 1833–40, but returned to Fort Snelling, serving intermittently as commandant, with the rank of captain, 1841–48. While there Eastman painted scenes of Dakota and Chippewa life; he illustrated a federal study of Indians in the 1850s and painted Indians and forts for display in the U.S. Capitol after the Civil War.

26. Jean Baptiste Faribault, Alexander (or Alexandre) Faribault, and William Henry Forbes. Jean Baptiste Faribault (1775–1860), born in Canada, was the American Fur Company's agent for the Northwest, 1796–1806, based at times in today's Iowa and Minnesota, before becoming an independent fur trader. He was imprisoned by the British during the War of 1812. Credited as the first white person to farm west of the Mississippi, he taught agricultural methods to the Sioux and maintained good relationships with many Indian groups; he married a half-Dakota woman in 1805. By the 1830s they lived at Mendota. Alexander (c. 1802 or 1806–1882), their son, probably born at Prairie du Chien, served as U.S. agent at Fort Snelling in the early 1820s. He married a part-Sioux woman and began fur trading with Indians at various places in present-day Minnesota. In 1844 he moved his post to the location on the Cannon

River that became the town of Faribault, though he spent summers with his family at Mendota. Alexander's mother died in 1847 and his father later moved to Faribault. Alexander served in Minnesota's territorial house, 1851–52. Forbes (1815–75) ran a hardware business in his native Montreal before joining the American Fur Company as Sibley's clerk, at Mendota, 1837–47; in 1847 he took charge of the company's nearby St. Paul Outfit. He served in Minnesota's territorial council, 1849–53. In 1846 he and Alexander Faribault hunted on the Cedar River with Sibley, explorer John C. Frémont, and some Sioux; that year Forbes married Alexander Faribault's daughter.

27. A Pennsylvania-born Democrat, Mullan (?–1851) worked in the 1830s as a reporter for the Lexington (Ky.) *Daily Observer* and as editor of the Jonesboro *Tennessee Sentinel*. During the Polk administration he served as a clerk in the Treasury Department and, by 1847, the Indian Department; he held the latter position until his death. Mullan was secretary to the U.S. commissioners who signed the Winnebago-U.S. treaty in 1846 and was appointed to conduct a census of Cherokees in North Carolina, preparatory to their removal, in 1848.

FROM DAVID LEVY YULEE¹

Dear Sir

Wheeling [Va.]² August 2. 1847

A communication was made to me by a friend from Flo. with whom I met at Philadelphia, which I thought it my duty to procure in writing, in order, that you might be put in possession of the intelligence he communicated to me. It is a strange matter, and I would not have attached much consequence to it were it not that my friend who is a man of high intelligence & character, himself fully believes that there is a great deal in it. I therefore enclose you his statement.³

D. L. YULEE

ALS. Location unknown. Probably addressed to Washington City. Polk's AEI: "Referred to the Secretary of the Treasury [Robert J. Walker, whose absence in Rockaway, N.Y., for his health left many of his duties to chief clerk McClintock Young], whose attention is called to this communication, with the suggestion that the information which it communicates, is of such a character, as may make it proper, to direct more than ordinary vigilance, to the coast of *Florida* to detect and punish the violation of the Revenue laws, alleged to exist or to be in contemplation; Augt. 6th 1847; J.K.P." Young's AE: "GR/Write a strong letter to the Collr urging vigilance. Send a copy of the paper inclosed by Mr Y." From Gilbert Rodman's⁴ AE: "wrote to collr. of D[uties]. of St Johns,⁵ & also to collrs. of Savannah charleston Richmond Balte. Phila. & New York⁶ Augt 11/47."

1. David Levy Yulee (1810–86) was born David Levy in St. Thomas, in the West Indies. A lawyer, he represented Florida Territory as a delegate in the U.S. House, 1841–45. He represented the state of Florida as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate, 1845–51 and 1855–61.

2. Probable state (now West Virginia) identified through content analysis and from other correspondence.

3. Yulee enclosed an unsigned letter to him dated July 29, 1847, at Philadelphia. The letter repeats what the author told Yulee that morning: "that an association was formed, which embraced some of the merchants in our principal cities" and conspirators in England and France, "for the purpose of carrying on smuggling on a *very large scale* on the Florid coast." Goods would travel from the European countries to "Cuba & other Islands," then "into the St. Johns River in vessels going in for Lumber, and shipped from there in the storehold to Savannah New York &c." One of the smugglers told him about the plan "within the last few weeks" because they wanted to land goods on his Florida plantation; the smuggler named another planter, "residing near the mouth of the St. Johns, who he said had agreed to" such a proposal for a 5 percent cut. Because Yulee's correspondent declined the proposal, he did not learn the identities of the participants in Richmond, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York City. He declines to name those participants whose identities he does know. AL. Location unknown.

4. Young (1801–63), a Baltimore-born lawyer, served as chief clerk of the Treasury Department, 1833–49. He frequently acted as Treasury secretary, ad interim. Rodman (1800–1862), a Democrat born in Bucks County, Penn., worked as a merchant in Philadelphia before studying law; he completed those studies in the office of George M. Dallas. In 1825 he began his practice in Lancaster, Penn. Rodman became a clerk in the Treasury Department in 1829 and was promoted to chief clerk in 1853.

5. James Dell (1784–1848), of Newmansville, Fla., served as customs collector for the St. Johns district, 1823–48. A Georgia native who had lived in Florida since 1802, he had led troops in the Patriot War, an attempt by Georgians in 1812–13 to wrest East Florida from Spain; had served in the territorial legislature for most of the 1830s; and had superintended the lighthouse on the St. Johns River in 1832.

6. William B. Bulloch, William J. Grayson, Thomas Nelson, William H. Marriott, James Page, and Cornelius W. Lawrence. Grayson (1788–1863) was customs collector at Charleston, S.C., 1841–53. A teacher, lawyer, planter, railroad director, and newspaper editor from Beaufort, S.C., he had served in the state house, 1813–15 and 1822–25, and senate, 1826–31, and as commissioner of equity for Beaufort District, 1831–33. A Whig and a Nullifier, he had represented his district in the U.S. House, 1833–37. Virginia native Nelson served as collector at Richmond, Va., 1835–49. Maryland native Marriott (c. 1789–1851) was collector at Baltimore, 1844–49. He had served in the state legislature most years from 1810 to 1830, including as house Speaker, 1822 and 1824, and senate president, 1828–30.

FROM ANDREW LANE¹

County of Cumberland, near Portland, Me,

3d August 1847

Dear sir,

I was at New Haven when you arrived there² and had the pleasure of seeing you and taking you by the hand, although, little did you think, that you were shaking the hand of your correspondent, *Amor Patriae*.

I was pleased to see the attention shown you at every important point throughout your eastern tour, but could not help laughing in my sleeve to see my worthy Whig friends so *superzealous* to outstrip their Democratic brethren, in showing attention to one, against whom, perhaps only the day before, they had been so fruitful in unqualified denunciation. But so goes the world, and so it will go doubtless as long as selfishness seeks to obtain the larger half of the loaves and fishes.³

However, who of us can cast the first stone?⁴ "We see the right, and still the wrong persue."⁵ So says the proverb, and our consciences attest its truth. If all of us would turn our attention to *beam picking*⁶ instead of moat hunting how rapidly would society improve.

I was very much amused at a little incident that occurred at New Haven. I said to a learned Judge, come let us go and pay our respects to the President? No, he replied, I don't want to see any thing that bears the name of Polk. However, he concluded to go, and on returning remarked—"Why, did you ever see such a change in a man! He was Speaker of the House when I was Member of Congress, and was then a fine likely looking fellow, with a full head of hair and as black as yours; but now he looks haggard and grey, and old enough to be your father! I begin to think with you, that he is too honest to be President."⁷

On the 5. ult. I left New Haven, on a little eastern tour of pleasure for a few weeks, and selected the day of departure for the purpose of getting clear of the noise bustle and uproar of a city celebration of *Independence*,⁸ but on my arrival in Boston I found I had arrived at its very head quarters; and not only found it very difficult to get lodging at the Tremont House,⁹ but to sleep after being cotted in a parlour; however, I soon got over the inconvenience.

Whilst in Boston, I had a good deal of conversation with distinguished gentlemen on the affairs of the nation, and among others, an hour and a half with Abbot Lawrence,¹⁰ who is somewhat celebrated nowadays for his wealth and munificance. By the bye, he was member of Congress, if my memory serves me right, when you were Speaker? Mr. Lawrence is really a practical philosopher on most subjects that concern the interests of our country, but he has some kinks in his cranium peculiar to the meridium in which he lives; apart from these, he perhaps

is as sound a man as any in the country. In speaking of a dissolution of the Union, he remarked—My dear sir, when the fanatics come to me to talk about a dissolution of the Union, I tell them, I wont hear a word upon the subject! Why, said I, my dear sir, you remarked a few moments ago, that you were in favor of the “Wilmot proviso”¹¹; and, believe me, had that carried, the Union would not have lasted one year thereafter. When one’s house is burnt, it makes but little difference to the owner whether it was set on fire indirectly by a friend or directly by an enemy.

Had the Willmot proviso received the sanction of Congress the Southern States would have raised *en mass* this very summer, without distinction of party, and would have demanded an amendment of the Constitution—to wit—that all the Slaves should be represented as well as the women and children of the North, then the great State of Louisiana would have *six* representatives instead of four to offset the seven of Maine; a more equal proportion.¹²

Secondly, that it should be *Treason* for any citizen to meddle with the domestic concerns of a neighbouring state, and especially with *slavery*, by word or deed. All the States that would refuse to adopt this amendment would be set off by themselves, and when the count was taken, doubtless New England would be found the only states that would refuse to accept it. Hence she would be cut adrift and no longer allowed to enjoy a monopoly of the great South and Southwestern trade, that England would pay the South 15 to 20,000,000 for, per annum! Thus cut off and having to pay on her goods wares & merchandize 30 to 40 pr. ct. she would go down hill as fast as she had gone up the last 20 yrs, and instead of having her Boston graced with *Millionaires* she would have it filled with Beggarheirs. Now, my dear sir, said I, is this desirable? If not, call you dogs out, and act in good faith towards the Constitution. It is quite provoking enough to the South to bear the blackguard “moral Suasion”¹³ of Northern fanatics, and blasphemy of God’s holy-word, outside of Congress, but if it is to be brought in there by unprincipled demagogues to make capital, believe me, the days of the present Constitution, if not the Union, are numbered!

That incendiary Giddings,¹⁴ I understand, is prowling about through the free States, & especially Yankee doom, again! I wish to God I could meet him; I would show up his *toryism*¹⁵ in a way that he never saw it before, even himself. I hear some ominous givings out that the *sinues of war* are to be stoped! Just see this tory principle! These wretches would withhold the necessary supplies, if they had the power, and compel their Government to back out of a just war, if any war in this world was just, in disgrace! yes, the laughingstock and byword of all Europe—publishing themselves to the world, *a nation of Cowards!*

If you and I had been betting men, we would have wagered all we possess, *before the last Baltimore convention*, that either Messrs Van Buren or Clay would be the next President?¹⁶ and had either, Texas would not have been annexed, and consequently, no war with Mexico, probably.¹⁷ But, in the providence of God, both those dignitaries were rejected, and his good and faithful servant, James K. Polk, like David of old,¹⁸ was selected to carry his purposes into effect. Mexico had grossly abused their privileges. Instead of taking the great, Northern Republic for their example, their advance has been “*backward*,” till the Great Governor of the Universe were tired of them. The poor people, instead of being enlightened and initiated into self government, were kept in ignorance, and ground like wheat between two millstones—the mercenary Priests on the one hand, and the Mercenary Demagogues and soldiery on the other, till God was *tired out* with them, and has raised you up to the Presidency to carry on a Christian war, to put them in pupilage again, with the view of civilizing christianising them; compelling them “to live a sober and righteous life in Godliness and *honesty*”¹⁹—and in the mean time, teach them, by making all sorts religion free, the introduction of the enterprising school master and mechanic—showing them how to make roads, Rail roads and canals—especially across the Isthmus of Darien²⁰—how to govern themselves, and their intercourse with other nations on christian principles. Could there be a more Godlike service rendered any nation than this? Certainly not. And it will only require ten years to do all this and pay ourselves through the Customhouses & working their mines.

Now, my dear sir, push the boat; and allow no tory cry, or “shots in the rear”²¹ from the tory Press to deter you from completing the conquest and keeping possession till you have perfected the whole plan as I have described, and not allow yourself to be intimidated, or let them slip through your fingers, lest your fate be like his who said to the Prophet—“While thy servant was busy here and there, *he was gone!*”²²

Deus tibi bene faxit,²³

AMOR PATRIÆ

[P.S.] Thus far, never did President administer the affairs of this government better than yourself, or more dignifiedly, or more honorably—nor was the country ever more flourishing, notwithstanding the war. Where I writing over my own signature I would not be so frank.

AL. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Andrew Lane (1796–1862) wrote this letter and at least six others to Polk under the pseudonym “Amor Patriæ,” Latin for “love of one’s country.” (He was the author of the letters of April 6 and October 20, 1846, listed in Volume

11 of this series as anonymous.) Born in New Gloucester, Mass. (now Maine), as a young man he moved to Illinois and then to Louisiana. There he and his brothers Ebenezer and William A. Lane operated a New Orleans mercantile business, E. Lane & Co., and Andrew studied law and briefly held a judicial post. In 1828–33 the Lane brothers donated money to found Lane Theological Seminary in Walnut Hills, Ohio, outside Cincinnati, to which city Andrew and Ebenezer moved. Andrew had relocated to New York City by 1840 and to New Haven, Conn., by 1845. Sometime before 1846 he acquired a plantation, and he retained ownership while in Connecticut. He published three proslavery pamphlets as “Amor Patriæ,” beginning with *A Comparison of Slavery with Abolitionism; Together with Reflections Deduced from the Premises, Touching the Several Interests of the United States* (1848). Continuing to practice law, he lived in New Haven the rest of his life. For more on Lane’s life and writings, see Michael David Cohen, “James K. Polk and the Mystery of Amor Patriæ,” *New England Quarterly*, 86 (June 2013): 266–92.

2. Polk traveled through the North from June 22 to July 7, 1847. His only visit to New England, the trip took him to Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine. While in New Haven, on June 28, Polk shook hands with all who came to see him in City Hall—until the sheer size of the crowd forced him to start offering his hand only to the women.

3. The phrase “loaves and fishes,” since the seventeenth century, has referred to the declaration of support—usually religious but in this case political—due to money or gifts. All four gospels discuss these gifts from Jesus, though the phrase refers chiefly to John 6:26: “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.” Lane probably means that Whigs wanted to win Polk’s patronage or constituents’ votes. All biblical quotations in annotations in this volume come from the King James Version.

4. Lane refers to John 8:7: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.”

5. Paraphrase of Ovid *Metamorphoses* 7.28–29: “I see the right, and I approve it too,/Condemn the wrong—and yet the wrong pursue.”

6. Lane probably uses “picking” to mean “throwing” or “casting”—in this case, casting a beam across a moat—a definition now used chiefly in northern England.

7. This paragraph likely refers to Democrat Andrew T. Judson (1784–1853), who had served in the U.S. House, 1835–36, while Polk was Speaker, and who was U.S. judge for Connecticut, 1836–53. A lawyer, he earlier had served in both houses of the Connecticut legislature and as state’s attorney at Windham. Judson lived in Canterbury, not New Haven, and, on June 3, 1847, wrote a supportive letter inviting Polk to visit his home on this trip. That noted, however, the exchange recounted by Lane could well have occurred during a visit by Judson to New Haven and Judson’s letter to Polk may have arisen from courtesies perceived as due a sitting president.

8. July 4, Independence Day, fell on a Sunday in 1847, hence the celebration on Monday, July 5.

9. Designed by architect Isaiah Rogers (who later designed New York City's Astor House hotel) and completed in 1829, the Tremont House, at the corner of Beacon and Tremont Streets, was a prominent Boston hotel. The four-story, granite-sheathed structure of neoclassical design was known for its many modern amenities and was among the first hotels, possibly the first, to offer guests indoor plumbing and running water. The Tremont was demolished in the 1890s.

10. Self-made man Abbott Lawrence (1792–1855) was a Massachusetts industrialist, merchant, importer, educator, philanthropist, and politician. He founded the town of Lawrence as well as the Lawrence Scientific School, at Harvard University, in Cambridge. Anti-Jacksonian and Whig in his politics, he served in the U.S. House, 1835–37 and 1839–40, and as U.S. minister to the United Kingdom, 1849–52.

11. In August 1846 Polk had asked Congress for a two-million-dollar appropriation for the Mexican War. Rep. David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania, had introduced an amendment to the resulting bill excluding slavery from any territory acquired in the war. The amendment had passed in the House but not in the Senate; the unamended Two Million Dollar Bill also had failed in the Senate. The Wilmot Proviso was repeatedly introduced thereafter, including as an amendment to the Three Million Dollar Bill in early 1847, when the House again voted to amend the bill but the Senate again refused; the unamended bill became law on March 3. The Wilmot Proviso never won Senate approval. (If passed, it would have preserved the status quo in many areas. Mexico had abolished slavery in 1829, though it had exempted the Isthmus of Tehuantepec and, in response to protests, quickly had added an exemption for Texas.)

12. Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution stipulates that three-fifths of slaves be counted in determining each state's representation in the U.S. House.

13. "Moral suasion" refers to the nonviolent strategy of Boston abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison to persuade—through moral, rather than political, appeals—supporters of slavery to denounce and end all participation in the institution.

14. Joshua R. Giddings (1795–1864), of Ohio, served in the U.S. House successively as a Whig, a Free Soiler, and a Republican, 1838–59. He ranked among that body's most strident opponents of slavery.

15. "Tory" or "toryism" was a pejorative derived from a conservative faction and later party in British politics aligned with the Crown, used by Democrats to refer to the U.S. Whig party and its Federalist predecessor.

16. Lane's reference to "*the last Baltimore convention*" and Martin Van Buren and Henry Clay is misleading in that the two men competed not against one another but at different conventions. The Whigs and Democrats both had their national conventions in Baltimore in 1844, the Whigs on May 1 and the Democrats on May 27–30. Clay won the Whig nomination. Van Buren had seemed the likely Democratic nominee at the beginning of that party's convention, but a rule requiring a two-thirds majority to nominate a candidate led to his defeat and Polk's nomination. New York lawyer Van Buren (1782–1862) was a frequent rival to Polk. After losing the Democratic presidential nomination to Polk, he declined to serve as Polk's running mate. In 1848 Van Buren again

unsuccessfully sought the presidency as the Free Soil party's candidate. To those contests he brought a formidable record: New York state senator, 1812–20; state attorney general, 1816–19; U.S. senator, 1821–28; New York governor, 1829; U.S. secretary of state, 1829–31; vice president under Pres. Andrew Jackson, 1833–37; and president, 1837–41. Clay (1777–1852), a Kentucky lawyer, diplomat, and politician born in Virginia, began his federal career as a Democratic Republican and concluded it as a prominent Whig. He served in the U.S. Senate, 1806–7, 1810–11, 1831–42, and 1849–52, and in the U.S. House, 1811–14, 1815–21, and 1823–25. He was Speaker during most of his time in the House and secretary of state under Pres. John Quincy Adams, 1825–29. He ran for president successively as the nominee of the Democratic-Republican (1824), National Republican (1832), and Whig (1844) parties. He lost the 1844 race to Polk. Early in his career, Clay was associated with the War Hawks, expansionist congressmen who, leading up to the War of 1812, favored war with the United Kingdom; in 1814 he was a member of the U.S. delegation that negotiated the Treaty of Ghent, which ended that conflict. By the 1820s Clay was identified with the “American System,” a panoply of legislation that called for high tariffs to protect domestic industries and federal support for transportation-infrastructure improvements. He passionately opposed many of Polk's presidential policies, including the Mexican War.

17. In 1844 Van Buren and Clay expressed opposition to the annexation of Texas, a breakaway republic from Mexico since 1836. After annexation supporter Polk's election, Congress in February 1845 passed, at Pres. John Tyler's urging, a joint resolution authorizing annexation. Texas was formally accorded statehood on December 29. The war between the United States and the Republic of Mexico—referred to herein and by U.S. contemporaries as the Mexican War—took place between April 1846 and February 1848. It arose, in part, from Texas annexation. Not only had Mexico never recognized the Republic of Texas. Beyond that, the United States—adopting a position held by the Republic of Texas and, even earlier, by Texas residents while Texas was governed as a province of Mexico—regarded the Rio Grande as the Texan, and thus the U.S.-Mexico, boundary. Mexico's government long had insisted that the Nueces River, to the northeast, marked that boundary. The war began after U.S. troops under Gen. Zachary Taylor, ordered by Polk in July 1845 and again in January 1846, entered the disputed land. On April 25, 1846, Mexican troops fired on them. The war's conclusion resulted in the U.S. acquisition of California and today's American Southwest. It also secured U.S. title to Texas. On the Mexican War, Texas annexation, and their diplomatic, political, and military entwinement, see Tom Chaffin's introduction to Volume 12 of this series.

18. Reference is to David, a king of Israel depicted in the Bible's Old Testament; 1 Samuel 22:14 asks, “And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David?”

19. Paraphrase of 1 Timothy 2:2: “that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”

20. Darien was an ill-fated and short-lived colony on the Isthmus of Panama, established by the Kingdom of Scotland in the late seventeenth century. Situated

on the Caribbean Sea, Darien was envisioned by its Scottish colonizers—and subsequent individuals and nations—as a trade nexus by which cargoes from the Atlantic might easily be transported across the isthmus to its Pacific shore. After the collapse of the original Darien, others moved cargoes across the isthmus via beasts of burden, riverboats, and rail, and, after 1914, by canal. In 1846 the United States signed the Mallarino-Bidlack Treaty with Colombia, then called New Granada. Among other provisions, it gave the United States the right of transit across the Isthmus of Panama. The Senate did not approve the measure until June 3, 1848.

21. Lane may refer to an item in the *New York Herald*, July 13, 1847, titled “The Fire in the Rear.” It quoted an article from the *Washington Daily Union*—a Democratic, not Whig, newspaper—of July 10, titled “The Administration and Gen. Scott,” which refuted charges by Whig newspapers sympathetic to Winfield Scott that Polk had given Nicholas P. Trist authority “to interfere . . . with Gen. Scott’s military command” in Mexico. The *Union* article added that the Polk administration would, if required, elucidate its relationship with Scott by releasing his correspondence with the War Department, as it had before. The *Herald* described that article as a “shot in the rear of General Scott.” For a similar phrase, see letter and notes in Robert B. Reynolds to Polk, February 7, 1848.

22. Paraphrase of a line spoken by an unnamed prophet to King Ahab, of Israel, in 1 Kings 20:40: “While your servant was busy here and there, the man disappeared.”

23. Latin expression meaning “God bless you.”

TO WILLIAM O. BUTLER¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City August 7th 1847

I have as yet no reliable information upon which to calculate that an hon[ora]ble² peace which I so much desire, can be soon concluded with Mexico. Shortly after the fall [of]³ *Vera Cruz*,⁴ deeming that to be a propitious [. . .] *Mr Trist*⁵ was despatched to the Head Quarters of the Army,⁶ in the character of a commissio[ner] clothed with full powers to enter upon neg[otia]tions and to conclude a Treaty, at any mome[nt] when the Mexican authorities should indicate [. . .]⁷ willingness to do so. You have no doubt [. . .] stated in the newspapers, that Mexico had appointed [. . .]⁸ commissioners on her part,⁹ to meet and [confer] with him, but this is, mere rumour, as I [. . .] no authentic or official information to that eff[ect]. If it shall turn out that that rumour is not well founded and that Mexico has again refused [to] avail herself of our readiness to conclude [an]¹⁰ honourable peace, the great probability is that [our]¹¹ Army has before this time, moved forward from *Puebla* upon the City of *Mexico*.¹² I regret very deeply that contrary to all my anticipations, and I feel greatly to the prejudice of the public service, a most unfortunate misunderstanding occurred between *Genl. Scott*¹³ and *Mr*

Trist, immediately after the arrival of the latter at *Vera Cruz*, which continued to exist up to the date of my last advices from them,¹⁴ and which had prevented any personal conferences between them, or that harmony and concert of action, which was so essential to the accomplishment of the objects of the Government. They were expected to confer freely together, and to co-operate each in his own sphere, in effecting if practicable an honourable peace. *Mr Trist* possessed no military powers whatever, and *Genl. Scott* possessed no Diplomatic powers. *Mr Trist* was instructed to communicate to *Genl. Scott* without reserve, his *confidential* instructions,¹⁵ to the end that *Genl. Scott* being in possession of them, and fully understanding the object of *Mr Trist's* mission, might be the better enabled, to shape and direct his own military movements, according to his own judgement and discretion, and without any interference in them from *Mr Trist*. *Mr Trist* on his arrival at *Vera Cruz*, forwarded to *Genl. Scott*, then at *Jalappa*,¹⁶ a despatch which [. . .] to him from the Secretary of War,¹⁷ enclosing one from the Secretary of State to the minister of Foreign affairs, for Mexico,¹⁸ but expecting to see him in a few days, did not communicate to him his *confidential instructions*. *Genl. Scott* totally misapprehended, the character of his mission and his powers, and unfortunately in an angry correspondence [which]¹⁹ followed, and a most inconsiderate and causeless quarrel sprang up between them, which is most deeply to be deplored, because there is but too much reason to believe, that vital interests of the country have been greatly injured, if not sacrificed by it. It is not necessary that I should indulge in the expression of any opinion, as to which of them was most to blame, for the errors into which they have permitted their passions to betray them. Every possible means have been taken here, by instructions to both,²⁰ to put an end to this quarrel, and if possible to enforce harmonious action between them, in executing the orders of the Government, but whether these have been successful or not in producing such a result, I am not advised.

I have strong reasons to believe that if the despatch of *Mr Buchanan*, to the minister of Foreign affairs of Mexico, had been forwarded shortly after it reached *Genl. Scott's* hands, which was on the 7th of May, a peace might and probably would have been concluded before this time. The Mexican army had but a few days before, been defeated and dispersed at *Cerro Gordo*.²¹ The Government and people of Mexico had not recovered from the shock, and that was the golden moment to strike for peace. That moment (& as I have reason to believe in consequence of the unfortunate and most unnecessary quarrel,) was suffered to pass, and many weeks to elapse, before *Mr Buchanan's* despatch was forwarded to Mexico, and even then it was conveyed by *Mr Trist*, (to whom

it seems *Genl. Scott* had returned it) through the British Legation. The delay thus produced, afforded time to the military leaders of Mexico, to rally and embody a considerable part of the scattered fragments of their defeated army at *Cerro Gordo*, as well as to dissipate the alarm and general consternation which pervaded among the Mexicans immediately after that battle, and to rouse the whole population to engage in a guerilla war, and to inspire them with hope, that they could successfully resist an attack on the City of Mexico. Such is the present condition of things, and the indications now are that there may be a farther and a vigorous resistance to our arms, and that peace may not be near at hand. My policy remains unchanged. The war must be prosecuted with vigor until peace is attained. *Genl. Scott's* column is now being reinforced as rapidly as possible. All the recruits and volunteers not yet sent to the seat of War, will proceed to *Vera Cruz* and join that column. *Genl. Taylor*²² will hold his present position and occupy a defensive line for the present and all the forces, not in his opinion required for that purpose, he has been instructed to order to *Vera Cruz*. This has been done with *Genl. Taylor's* full concurrence. Indeed in a despatch received from him at the war Department, dated about the middle of June he makes the suggestion.²³ Among other forces, which have been ordered to *Vera Cruz* [is] *Col. Hays's*²⁴ Mounted Texas Regiment. These and the Mounted acclimated troops called from Louisiana²⁵ [. . .] from other quarters, will be useful in opening [. . .] keeping open the communication between *Vera Cruz* and the army. *Genl. Taylor* has intimated [. . .] wish to join *Genl. Scott's* column, and will [remain] on his present line of operations. Brigadier Generals *Marshall* of Ky. and *Lane* of Indiana,²⁶ have been ordered to *Vera Cruz*.

And now, My Dear Sir: having placed you in possession of these facts and views, my main desire addressing you this letter, is to express to you, my anxious desire, if the state of your wound and health will possibly permit it, that you should resume your command in the field in *Genl. Scott's* column. There are mighty reasons why I deem it important to the public that you should do so if you can. You would be second in command, and it may be that contingencies may happen, which would in a short time devolve upon you the *chief command*. But whether such contingencies shall occur or not, such is my confidence in your discretion & good sense, and in your military skill and experience, that I earnestly desire that the country shall have the benefit of your serving in the field at this critical juncture. I know that nothing but physical disability can prevent you from resuming your command. Anxious however as I am that you should do so, at an early period, the earlier the better, I would not have you to undertake it if in your judgement the condition of your wound

or health is such as to make it imprudent for you to do so. You must not My Dear Sir: misunderstand^[d]²⁷ me. If you are unable to go *at present*, I hope you soon may be able and you must not for a moment think of resigning, as it has been intimated to me you had thought of doing, if your wound continued to be troublesome to you. Nothing is further from my wish. Indeed I should regard it as a public calamity, if in the present stage of the War, and in the present condition of the army, if you were to resign. What I most desire is, if you shall feel that you are physically able to do so, that you should repair at your earliest practicable convenience to *Genl. Scott's Head Quarters* & resume your command.

I request that you will give me an early answer to this letter, and if I hear from you, as I hope I may, that you can proceed to the army, I will cause an order to be sent to you by the Secretary of War, without delay, to that effect; or you may on receiving this letter proceed at once, and the order will follow you & meet you, either at *New Orleans* or *Vera Cruz*.

I have only to add that I have waited impatiently for several days—to receive some decisive information from Mexico. If I shall learn that there is no immediate prospect of [peace] as I fear I shall, I think it probable that I will immediately call out, at least 5,000. additional Volunteers, chiefly from Ky. & Tennessee, who will be ordered to *Vera Cruz*. Hoping to hear from you soon

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Carrollton, Ky., and marked “*Private and unofficial.*”

1. Butler (1791–1880), a Kentucky lawyer, served in the War of 1812 and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1839–43. Rejoining the army in June 1846 as a major general of volunteers, he served as second-in-command to Gen. Zachary Taylor. After recovering from wounds suffered during the Battle of Monterrey, he returned to Mexico in February 1848 and succeeded Gen. Winfield Scott as chief commander of the U.S. forces. In May 1848 he resigned from the army and accepted the vice-presidential nomination of the Democratic party alongside presidential nominee Lewis Cass.

2. Unless noted otherwise, brackets indicate text missing, illegible, or uncertain due to a light ink transfer.

3. Word either absent or missing due to a light ink transfer.

4. A major port on Mexico's east coast, Veracruz was in March 1847 the site of a landing by U.S. amphibious forces under Winfield Scott.

5. Born in Virginia and raised in Louisiana, lawyer and planter Nicholas P. Trist (1800–1874) attended the U.S. Military Academy but did not graduate. He read law in Thomas Jefferson's office and, in 1824, married Jefferson's granddaughter Virginia Jefferson Randolph. After stints as Jefferson's private secretary, U.S. State Department clerk, and Pres. Andrew Jackson's private secretary, he became consul at Havana, Cuba, in 1833, and chief clerk in the State

Department in 1845. Due to his fluency in Spanish and experience in Latin American affairs, he was sent to Mexico as a commissioner in April 1847 to negotiate an end to the Mexican War. Trist had a tumultuous relationship with Polk and other U.S. civil and military leaders during that assignment. Even so, Polk accepted the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the peace compact that Trist and his Mexican counterparts signed on February 2, 1848.

6. When Trist went to Mexico, the army's headquarters lay at Veracruz. Winfield Scott had established it there after entering that city on March 29.

7. Word either absent or missing due to a light ink transfer.

8. Word either absent or missing due to a light ink transfer.

9. In July and August 1847, Mexican and U.S. newspapers reported that Mexico's government had appointed Manuel Eduardo de Gorostiza, Manuel Baranda, and José María de Tornel y Mendivil as commissioners to negotiate with Trist. In fact, however, the government had not authorized a peace commission. On the dealings that had led to the possibility, see letter and notes in Thomas P. Moore to Polk, November 23, 1847.

10. Word either absent or missing due to a light ink transfer.

11. Word either absent or missing due to a light ink transfer.

12. Winfield Scott, after entering the city of Puebla—west of Veracruz and roughly midway between Veracruz and Mexico City—in May 1847, established his headquarters there. By coincidence, on August 7, the day that Polk wrote this letter, Scott's army, leaving a single garrison behind, was leaving Puebla to advance on Mexico City.

13. Winfield Scott (1786–1866), a Virginia native whose army service reached back to 1808, commanded U.S. forces during the War of 1812 and several Indian wars before becoming general-in-chief of the army, 1841–61. His Mexican War victories included the 1847 Battles of Veracruz, Cerro Gordo, Churubusco, Molino del Rey, Chapultepec, and Mexico City. Scott was a Whig and his relations with Polk were fraught with tensions and mistrust. He was the Whigs' nominee for president in 1852 but lost to Democrat Franklin Pierce. Before retiring from the army in 1861, he devised the strategy, soon derided as the "Anaconda plan," that ultimately produced the Union's victory in the Civil War.

14. Polk probably refers to Trist's dispatch no. 7 to James Buchanan, dated June 13, 1847, at Puebla. Buchanan received it on July 15 and brought it to Polk the next day.

15. Trist's instructions—Buchanan's dispatch no. 1 to him, dated April 15, 1847—rendered him "a Commissioner," or "a confidential agent . . . clothed with full powers to conclude a Treaty of Peace with the Mexican Government," and gave him "the outfit and salary of a Chargé d'Affaires." They required him to obtain New Mexico and Alta California for the United States, and if possible Baja California and the right of transit across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec; he could offer Mexico up to thirty million dollars for all four. The instructions authorized Trist to share them and the enclosed treaty with Scott and with Cdre. Matthew C. Perry, commander of the Home Squadron. *WJB*–7, pp. 271–79.

16. After defeating General Santa Anna at Cerro Gordo, Scott's army entered Jalapa on April 19, 1847, and Scott established his headquarters there.

17. William L. Marcy to Scott, April 14, 1847, informed the general of Trist's diplomatic mission. The letter directed Scott to forward James Buchanan's dispatches to Manuel Baranda (see note below) to Mexico's military commander and instructed, "Should he [Trist] make known to you, in writing, that the contingency has occurred, in consequence of which the President is willing that further active military operations should cease, you will regard such notice as a direction from the President to suspend them until further orders from this department, unless continued or recommenced by the enemy." House Executive Document No. 56, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 130–31. Marcy (1786–1857) served as secretary of war for the entirety of Polk's term. A New York lawyer and Democrat, he also served in the U.S. Senate, 1831–33; as New York governor, 1833–39; and as U.S. secretary of state, 1853–57, under Pres. Franklin Pierce.

18. Trist carried two letters of April 15, 1847, from James Buchanan, U.S. secretary of state, to Manuel Baranda, Mexican minister of foreign relations. One rejects a Mexican proposal that the United States vacate Mexican territory and ports before the beginning of peace negotiations. It stipulates that Polk will not again offer to negotiate until he believes that Mexico will hear peace proposals. It also announces Trist's appointment as commissioner. The other letter introduces Trist. See both letters in *WJB*–7, pp. 267–70. A native of Pennsylvania and for most of his public career a Democrat, Buchanan (1791–1868) served in the U.S. House, 1821–31; as minister to Russia, 1832–33; in the U.S. Senate, 1834–45; as secretary of state, 1845–49; as minister to the United Kingdom, 1853–56; and as president, 1857–61. Baranda (1789–1860 or 1861) had become minister of foreign relations on March 27, 1847. He resigned on May 10 but soon returned to the post. A peace advocate, he earlier had served as minister of justice and public education and as governor of Guanajuato.

19. Polk struck out the bracketed word; he probably meant also to strike out "in."

20. Polk refers to Marcy's letters to Scott of May 31, June 15, and July 12, 1847, (House Executive Document No. 56, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 150–53, 165–66, 188–92) and Buchanan's to Trist of June 14 (dispatch no. 2) and July 13 (no. 3), 1847 (*WJB*–7, pp. 343–44, 361–66).

21. After the American capture of Veracruz, Santa Anna, at Cerro Gordo, tried to halt the advance of Winfield Scott's army toward Mexico City. The Americans arrived at Cerro Gordo on April 17 and defeated the Mexicans the next day.

22. Virginia native and Kentucky resident Zachary Taylor's (1784–1850) army career, begun in 1808, included the War of 1812 and various Indian wars. During the Mexican War, he led the U.S. troops in northern Mexico; among his victories were the Battles of Monterrey and Buena Vista. Taylor was elected as a Whig to the presidency in 1848. He held that office from March 1849 until July 1850, when he died in office and was succeeded by Millard Fillmore.

23. Polk refers to Taylor's dispatch no. 52 to Adj. Gen. Roger Jones, dated June 16, 1847. House Executive Document No. 56, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 367–68.

24. John C. Hays (1817–83), a native of Tennessee, was a renowned soldier and officer during the Texas war for independence and the Mexican War. He commanded Texas mounted regiments during the latter conflict. By the 1850s he had relocated to California, where he became active in politics and business.

25. The Louisiana Mounted Battalion was raised in July and August 1847.

26. Thomas Marshall and Joseph Lane. Marshall (1793–1853), a lawyer and a veteran of the War of 1812, served in the Kentucky legislature several terms between 1817 and 1844. Early on a Federalist, he later became a Democrat. He fought several duels, one of which left him with a lifelong hip injury. Marshall commanded Kentucky troops in the Mexican War as a brigadier general of volunteers, July 1846–July 1848. Lane (1801–81), born in North Carolina and raised in Kentucky, became an Indiana farmer and served in that state's legislature, 1822–46. In 1846 he joined the Indiana volunteers as a private and, within a few weeks, rose to colonel and then brigadier general. Brevetted a major general for gallantry at Huamantla in October 1847, he served until July 1848. A Democrat, he became governor of Oregon Territory, 1849–51; its delegate to Congress, 1851–59; and U.S. senator from the state of Oregon, 1859–61.

27. Letter cut off side of page.

TO LEVIN H. COE¹

Dear Sir:

Washington City August 7th 1847

I have received your letter of the 29th ultimo. The 500 acres of land lying near Somerville which you describe, and which you inform me *Mr E. Dickinson*² wishes to purchase belongs to *Marshall T. Polk Jr.*,³ who is now between sixteen and seventeen years old, and cannot be sold until he arrives at the age of twenty one years. I am his guardian but possess no power to dispose it. You can give *Mr Dickinson* this information.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Somerville, Tenn.

1. A Democrat and lawyer, Levin H. Coe (c. 1807–1850) served in the Tennessee Senate, 1837–41. As early as 1842, he was promoting Polk for national office. In 1846 Polk offered Coe, who had served as inspector general for the Tennessee militia, the rank of major as army quartermaster. Coe, expecting a generalship, declined the appointment. He was considered for the vice-presidential nomination in 1848.

2. Edwin Dickinson (1815–1900s?), a native of North Carolina, was a merchant and farmer in Somerville, Tenn.

3. Marshall T. Polk, Jr., (1831–84) Polk's nephew and ward, attended Georgetown College, Georgetown, D.C., before being appointed to the U.S. Military Academy in 1848; he graduated in 1852 with the rank of second lieutenant. His father, Marshall T. Polk, died in 1831; his mother, Laura Theresa Wilson Polk Tate, in 1848.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

My dear Sir/

Old Point Comfort [Va.] 9 August 1847

I received a letter this morning from Mr. Derrick¹ with a Despatch from Mr. Donelson,² No 31, to which is annexed a copy of his communication to Baron Canitz.³ The receipt of this communication will render it necessary to change my Despatch to him in one or two unimportant particulars. This can be done by Mr. Derrick under your direction: or if it be sent back to me I can do it myself & send it directly to Boston.

The attempt to change the existing Tariff by Treaty would, in my opinion, be highly impolitic & would re-open discussions which I had hoped were buried.⁴ You will perceive to what length Mr. Donelson would go from his communication to Baron Canitz.

We propose to reach Norfolk tomorrow afternoon & return here on Wednesday evening.⁵

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AE: received August 10, 1847; "relates to a dispatch which he had prepared to *Mr Donelson*, U.S. Minister to Prussia."

1. William S. Derrick (1802?–1852) was chief clerk of the U.S. State Department. A Whig from Pennsylvania, he was first appointed a clerk in that department in 1827 and served as chief clerk, 1843–44, 1845, 1847–48, and 1848–52. He served briefly as secretary of state, *ad interim*, in 1843.

2. Nashville-born Andrew J. Donelson (1799–1871), after losing his father as a boy, moved into the home of an aunt, Rachel Donelson Jackson, and her husband, Andrew Jackson. An 1819 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, he served as an aide-de-camp to General Jackson, 1820–22, and private secretary to President Jackson, 1829–37. He was admitted to the bar in 1823 and also had careers as a planter, journalist, and diplomat. Polk appointed him minister to Prussia in 1846 and to Germany in 1848; he served in Berlin until 1849.

3. Karl Ernst Wilhelm Freiherr von Canitz und Dallwitz (1787–1850) was the Prussian minister of foreign affairs, 1845–48. A general, he had served as adjutant to Prince William (uncle of the Prince William who attained that title in 1840) in the 1820s and later as Prussian minister at Kassel, Hanover, and Vienna. Donelson, in his dispatch no. 31 to James Buchanan, dated July 8, 1847, enclosed a copy of his letter of that date to Baron Canitz, opening negotiations for a treaty between the United States and the Zollverein. In the dispatch he asserts that this is an "auspicious" time to do so and argues for the wisdom and constitutionality of mutual tariff reductions by treaty. ALS and LS, copy. DNA–RG 59.

4. Germany, before 1871, consisted of many small independent states. Austria and Prussia were the most powerful. The Zollverein, or Deutscher Zollverein (German Customs Union), established in 1834 under Prussian leadership and maintained until 1919, enabled free trade and common tariffs among most

German states. Governing authority rested in a General Congress of representatives from all member states. Since January 1846 the United States had been negotiating a trade reciprocity treaty with the Zollverein modeled on an 1828 treaty with Prussia. (The U.S. Senate, in 1844, had denied its consent for an earlier trade treaty with the Zollverein.) Such a treaty would have lowered tariffs on American goods throughout the Zollverein and thus bolstered U.S. exports, including tobacco, rice, and lard, to the region, but no such pact was ever enacted. After learning of the Senate's likely reaction to the proposals, as well as the Zollverein's, Buchanan opposed them. In the dispatch to Donelson discussed in this letter—no. 11, dated August 7, 1847—Buchanan expresses the Polk administration's preference for obtaining trade agreements with the Zollverein members modeled on that with Hanover. See the dispatch in *WJB*–7, pp. 382–84. On the treaties with Hanover, see letter and notes in Donelson to Polk, February 22, 1848.

5. In his diary, Polk, without citing the reasons for the two men's travels, notes that Buchanan and Joseph Knox Walker left for Old Point Comfort, Va., on August 4. Walker returned to Washington City on the tenth and Buchanan by the sixteenth.

FROM THOMAS B. CHILDRESS¹

U.S. Ship *Jamestown*²

Dear Sir

Norfolk. Harbour [Va.] August 9th 1847

Having received no answer to my letter of the 19th Ult. and being very anxious to know whether or not you will have me detached, I take the priviledge of again addressing you, requesting that you will have me detached from this ship, and permitted to attend the Naval School³ the next session. Sir I can assure you that it will be very gratifying to my wishes to have the same. And hoping that you will excuse me for my annoyance, I remain . . .

T. B. CHILDRESS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received August 12, 1847.

1. Tennessean Thomas B. Childress (1827–1912) was a son of William G. Childress, a cousin of Sarah Childress Polk, who had died in 1846, and Mary Berkley Childress. Polk, in 1846, had appointed Thomas a midshipman.

2. The sloop-of-war *Jamestown* was one of two naval ships authorized by Congress and Polk in March 1847 to sail, with civilian crew and officers, to Ireland, carrying foodstuffs provided by private U.S. charities. Following that relief mission, and after its reacquisition by the navy, the *Jamestown* operated off Africa's west coast, suppressing the slave trade. By late 1847 it had been assigned to the navy's Mediterranean Squadron, where, months later, it become involved in safeguarding U.S. citizens and interests during the European revolutions of 1848.

3. Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft established the Naval School to train midshipmen in 1845. Located at Fort Severn in Annapolis, Md., it took most of its faculty from the Philadelphia Naval Asylum school, which it replaced. In 1850 it was renamed the U.S. Naval Academy. Hereafter in this volume's annotation, I refer to it by that modern name.

TO THOMAS B. CHILDRESS

Dear Sir:

Washington City Augt. 9th 1847

I have delayed my answer to your letter of the 19th ultimo, written at *Boston* until I could hear of the safe arrival of the [. . .]¹ ship *Jamestown* at *Norfolk*. You would have been permitted to remain at the school at Annapolis for a few months longer, had not the public service required an additional number of Midshipmen at sea. It is usually considered by Midshipmen a compliment, when they receive orders to go to sea on board a good ship. A part of the cruise of the *Jamestown*, as I learn from the Secretary of the Navy,² will be in the Mediterranean, which is one of the most delightful stations in the world. After you have made your cruise you will have another opportunity to prosecute your studies at the Naval school. You cannot as you request be detached from the *Jamestown*, nor ought you in my judgement [. . .] desire to be. When your cruise is over you will have seen the requisite length of sea-service, & when the time arrives for your examination, you will be prepared for it. *Mrs. Polk*³ who returned from Tennessee a few days ago, visited your Mother.⁴ The family were in usual health. Your Mother had heard that you had been ordered to sea and approved it. She expressed her strong desire that you should continue in the Navy. I have no doubt myself that it is the best possible situation you could occupy.

My advice to you is, to devote yourself to your profession, and in after life I have no doubt you will properly appreciate the advice I give you.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to "U.S. Ship Jamestown Norfolk Virginia."

1. Word or words here and below illegible, light ink transfer.

2. A Virginia native, John Y. Mason (1799–1859) became secretary of the navy in 1846 after George Bancroft resigned that office to become minister to the United Kingdom. Previously Mason had served as congressman from Virginia, 1831–37; U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, 1837–44; secretary of the navy, 1844–45; and, under Polk, U.S. attorney general, 1845–46.

3. Sarah Childress Polk (1803–91), the president's wife, served her husband as an advisor and confidant. Born in Rutherford County, Tenn., she was the third of six children of Joel Childress, a wealthy planter and businessman, and

Elizabeth Whitsitt Childress. She was educated at schools in Tennessee and at the Moravian Female Academy (now Salem College), Salem, N.C.

4. A resident of Williamson County, Tenn., Mary Berkley Childress (c. 1804–1850s?) had been, since 1846, the widow of Sarah Polk's cousin William G. Childress.

FROM ANONYMOUS¹

Respected Sir [New York City, c. August 10, 1847]²

I put the following facts before you for your consideration.

3:Fifths of the Seamen in our navy are foreigners.

One half the Seamen in our merchant marine, are foreigners
& renegades, many of them outlaws & pirates.

In the City of Newyork there are 3500 Boys, between 12 & 18,
who have no trade or regular Employment.

—In Philidelphie, about 2500.

In Baltimore, at least 1500.

In other atlantic cities at the least computed 8000

Total 15,000.

I respectfully suggest If a law, was Enacted, compelling all vessels under 100 Tons to take 1 apprentice over 100 Tons & under 300, 2 apprentices, & all other vessels 3 apprentices, 5 years would add 6000, & 10 yea's, 20000 native Sailors, to our mercantile marine. Will you notice the subject in your next message³ It would be hailed by all parties as a sound & judicious movement.

W P—

ALI. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne's⁴ AE: received August 11, 1847.

1. "W P;" whose identity remains unknown, previously had written to Polk on September 21, 1846, and June 5, 1847.

2. Probable place identified from postmark; approximate date identified from postmark and Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE.

3. Polk dated and submitted his Third Annual Message to Congress on December 7, 1847. He did not include this correspondent's proposal.

4. Tennessee-born Whitthorne (1825–91) was a clerk, during Polk's presidency, in the Fourth Auditor's Office (the office of the auditor of the Post Office Department). As in the circumstance that occasioned his AE on this letter, he often filled in as Polk's private secretary when Joseph Knox Walker was away. In January 1848 he went to Mexico as a bearer of dispatches. Whitthorne had read law in Polk's law office in Columbia; after Polk's presidency, he returned to

Columbia and established his own law practice. He later served as a Democrat in the state senate, 1855–58; the state house, 1859–61; the U.S. House, 1871–83 and 1887–91; and the U.S. Senate, 1886–87.

FROM JOHN J. HUGHES¹

Dear President:

New York August 10th 1847

A thousand thanks for your kindness in condescending to notice, and contradict, the vile statement of the Revd Mr. McCalla.² For those who know this poor man's infirmity, it was not necessary; but the number of such is few, whilst his position as a recognised clergyman gave weight to his accusation. It produced quite a sensation among our people here, but now the matter is all right again; and in their name, and (if possible) still more in my own, I return you most heart-felt thanks.

Having, on the occasion alluded to by Mr McCalla, had the honor of conversing with you, on the subject of the Mexican war, it will not appear strange that I should have watched its progress, with more than ordinary interest. In reviewing it, from the Battle of Palo-Alto to the taking of the Capital, which is just announced,³ I see nothing that can warrant a blush or a reproach, so far as the government, or our gallant troops are concerned. Peace was offered at every stage of our victorious progress. By their dogged rejection of it, the Mexicans only compelled us to whip them, another time. This is the abridged history of the Campaign.

In all other respects, I am sorry to say that my anticipations of the result, sixteen months ago, have been not disappointed but rather verified.

Let no one be mistaken, on the subject; the Mexican nation, as such, is more averse to peace, to-day, than it was, at the taking of Metamoras.⁴ With them, the state of the case, at present, is this: "Arista⁵ has been beaten; Santa Anna⁶ has been beaten; but the invincible Mexican nation! it is not been beaten, and it never can be, conquered." This, of course, is gasconade,⁷ but there *is* something in it. When their armies are annihilated, they will throw themselves on their *second* resources of Spanish resistance. They will oppose a dumb, deceitful, but not sullen, obstinacy, with apparent submission, where the pressure of superior force is felt; but, they will indulge the more exciting hostility and cruelty of private revenge, and guerilla atrocities, where the force is *not* felt. So that, if the stern consequences of the battle's decision, the destiny of war, are to be followed out, I see nothing left but to take possession of the whole country, organize and support an administration for its government, and let the matter take, from first, the form to which, in

this hypothesis, it must ultimately come. This would, in my opinion, be a blessing for Mexico, but for us, I fear, quite the reverse. Yet, what else seems to remain, in dealing with a people who *cannot* make war, and *will not* make peace? If not this, what will remain on the other hand, after a victorious military visit to the Capital, but a voluntary retreat, which, will be the jest of other nations?

Besides all this, the war is becoming more or less unpopular at home. Victories, now, do not excite the same enthusiasm as at first. An idea appears to be stealing rapidly over the minds of the people, that the war, against such a feeble and unfortunate foe, is too expensive, without promising any adequate return of either gain or glory. There is danger that these sentiments will be echoed from high places, in such a way as may, to some extent, embarrass the Councils, and paralyse the action, of the government, stimulate the activity of opposition at home, and furnish new encouragement to the obstinacy of the enemy abroad.

Taking this view of the case, I have arrived at a certain conclusion, in my own mind, which may be worth nothing, (and in that case should be treated accordingly) but which I venture to suggest to the Prest. throwing myself entirely on his indulgence for the apparent presumption that prompts me to do so. The course which I would recommend, would be this: 1st I should keep every post & possession we have acquired in Mexico, every inch. 2 Let Mexico (the city) be organised, temporarily as Vera-Cruz is.⁸ 3 Suspend *aggressive* hostilities, on this "status quo," for several months. 4. Make no more *official* overtures of peace to Mexico, in the interim, but be prepared to consider overtures from that side. 5. I would leave the Mexicans to *infer* that the "status quo" was to be permanent. 6th I would, in the mean time, without committing the government, in any thing more than good feelings and an honorable desire for peace, I would cause the Mexican people to be approached by an unofficial or, at most quasi unofficial peace-maker, entitled to a certain measure of confidence on both sides, who would have patience and prudence to allow the Mexican magnates whether of church or state, or both, to blow off their steam, against "the Yankees," and who (when they had thus relieved themselves,) would be able to whisper a little practical common sense into their ears, and understanding. His object, his offer should not be to make peace, but to prepare & dispose them either to seek for it, or, at least, to meet, in a fair spirit the terms in which it may be proposed.

I think this could be accomplished in a manner involving no duplicity, no intrigue, nothing dishonorable to either nation. I may be *entirely mistaken* in the hope of its success; but if not I should not despair of seeing the Mexicans, as it were *voluntarily*, and of their *own accord*, ready

to meet commissioners of peace & a treaty, founded on it, by the 20th of January 1848—hardly before. Such a peace and such a treaty would be far better than what may be extorted at the point of the bayonet, even if the bayonet *could* extort it, which I do not believe.

Some among us would, no doubt, suppose that with our armies in the capital of the country, we have a right to command these things, that it would *now* be stooping to have recourse to any other means, than those which the arbitrament of war has placed in our hands. But, in the broader & better fame of our nation it is preferable that we should appear as forbearing & magnanimous in the flash of victory as we had proved ourselves skilful & brave in the rage of battle.

For this purpose, I think, it will be expedient to approach the Mexicans in all that remains of *their independence*, through the medium of their religious, moral, social, and almost political, prejudices. It is necessary, as the Yankee phrase has it, to “get the *hang*”⁹ of their national character. My poor ideas for carrying out in detail, what I have here recommended, if thought worthy of a moment’s consideration, shall be most cheerfully submitted. Nor need I say that I should be of the happiest of men, if I could be instrumental, directly, or indirectly, in bringing about a peace. I feel that under a harsher, or less charitable interpretation than I anticipate from your indulgence, I should be almost inexcusable, and almost insolent, in offering a suggestion to those who are so much better acquainted with the subject than myself, and who need not my advice. I have the honor to remain,

JOHN HUGHES

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne’s AE: received August 12, 1847.

1. A native of Ireland, Hughes (1797–1864) served as bishop of New York, 1842–51, and archbishop of New York, 1851–64. On May 19, 1846, Polk conferred with him about the appointment of priests to accompany the army and to assure Mexican clergymen that the army would protect the Catholic religion and church property. Polk soon thereafter appointed two Jesuits to that role. The same year, Polk sought to recruit Hughes for a diplomatic mission in Mexico, a role that the bishop declined.

2. Polk denied William L. McCalla an army chaplaincy on October 14, 1846. The Presbyterian minister from Philadelphia then claimed that Polk had admitted in their meeting to having appointed the priests to accompany the army so that they could serve as spies. Many newspapers printed McCalla’s claim, leading Polk to deny it in an unsigned statement published in the *Washington Daily Union*, August 3, 1847. McCalla repeated his claim in the *Philadelphia Daily Sun*, August 7, adding that the president had consulted Hughes about appointing the spies. McCalla (1788–1859), born near Lexington, Ky., and a graduate of that city’s Transylvania University, served as an army chaplain, 1816–18.

From 1823 to 1854, he was affiliated with congregations in Philadelphia; by the late 1840s, he had ties with the anti-immigrant Native American party. Polk had asserted, when appointing the priests, that clergymen who shared their religion with most of Mexico's population could best convince Mexicans that the United States was not waging war on Catholicism. The U.S. army—and Polk's Democratic constituents—also included many Catholics. Polk considered McCalla a liar and, as he wrote in his diary on October 14, 1846, "a hypocrite or a bigotted fanatic." According to that diary entry, the president told the minister "that, thank God, under our constitution there was no connection between Church and State, and that in my action as President of the U.S. I recognized no distinction of creeds in my appointments to office." See also calendar entry for McCalla to Polk, c. August 8, 1847.

3. American forces commanded by Gen. Zachary Taylor defeated Mexicans at Palo Alto on May 8, 1846. On August 7, 1847—three days before the writing of this letter—American forces under Gen. Winfield Scott began marching from Puebla to Mexico City.

4. Matamoros is a city in northeastern Mexico, on the south bank of the Rio Grande, not far from the mouth of that river and directly opposite today's Brownsville, Tex. In May 1846 Matamoros and the area around it witnessed the first major military clashes of the Mexican War. These clashes ended in victory for U.S. forces under Taylor.

5. Gen. Mariano Arista (1802–55) commanded the Mexican forces at Matamoros. He abandoned the city in May 1846 after suffering defeat by the Americans at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma.

6. Gen. Antonio de Padua María Severino López de Santa Anna y Pérez de Lebrón (1794–1876)—hereafter referred to as Santa Anna—commanded Mexican military forces during the war for Texas independence and the Mexican War and led Mexico's government several times during the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, including 1846–47. After losing to the Americans at Buena Vista in February and at Cerro Gordo in April 1847, he opened unsuccessful peace negotiations in June.

7. "Gasconade," as a reference to extravagant boasting, is a word of French origin that found its way into English during the eighteenth century. In its original French usage, the term referred to the Gascony region, bordering Spain, in southwestern France.

8. After taking Veracruz on March 29, 1847, Winfield Scott created the military department of Veracruz surrounding it. As its governor, William J. Worth distributed free rations, set prices for food, and paid Mexicans to clean the streets.

9. This phrase for becoming acquainted with something came into use in the United States around the 1840s.

TO VERNON K. STEVENSON¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City August 10th 1847

Mrs. Polk has informed me of her consultation with yourself, Judge Catron² and the workmen in relation to the contemplated improvements to be made on my house and lot at Nashville.³ I approve the plan which seems to have been agreed upon. I much prefer the addition to the House which is proposed adjoining the present dining room, to the two rooms at the opposite ends of the building as was at one time thought of. In regard to the other parts of the plan of improvement, I shall not undertake to specify, those in detail, [nor]⁴ is it necessary that I should do so, for in regard to these, much must be left to your judgement and discretion. The pillars on the two fronts should be of good size, and proportioned to the size of the building, so as to give the establishment a good appearance from the two streets. In regard to any thing else, I leave it to you. I think the whole building should be covered with slate or copper, so as to make the roof fire-proof. When Gov. Brown⁵ contracted with *Mr Bass*⁶ for the property, he agreed to take, the shingles which *Mr Bass* had contracted for to cover it. For the shingles I have paid *Mr Bass*'s Bill for \$166.00, and he informed me that the shingles had been deposited in *Mr Vanoy*'s⁷ shop for safe-keeping.⁸ I suppose that they can be readily sold. I enclose to you herewith the plan of the building and proposed improvements thereto, which was prepared by *Mr Hughes*,⁹ and which *Mrs. Polk* brought with her.¹⁰ I will desire to have the improvements completed by the month of October of the next year. The insurance which you took on the property will expire in November. I wish at the expiration of the time to have the policy of Insurance renewed, with the stipulation that during the next year, I am to be at liberty to make the improvements, without thereby vitiating the policy. Should you be able to contract upon better terms, by paying the workmen in advance or as the work progresses, I can make such payments without inconvenience. I repeat that I have more confidence in your taste and judgement in such matters than I have in my own, and leave the execution of the improvement, with such suggestions as *Mrs. Polk* made to you, entirely to your own judgement.

I shall be placed under many obligations to you, for your kind attention to the business. With my respectful salutations to *Mrs. Stevenson*¹¹:

.....

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. I have heard nothing as yet from the Tennessee Election. J.K.P.

[P.S.] At *Mrs Polk's* suggestion, I have made notes in pencil on the plan, to which I call your attention. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

1. A Polk intimate both politically and personally, Kentucky native Stevenson (1812–84) achieved success as a businessman and railroad magnate in Nashville. He increased his prestige through three successive marriages into prominent Tennessee families: to Elizabeth Childress, first cousin of Sarah Childress Polk, in 1834; to Elizabeth Brown, daughter of wealthy Nashvillian Milton Brown, in 1850; and to Maria L. Bass, daughter of John M. Bass, president of Nashville's Union Bank of Tennessee and mayor of Nashville (1833–34), and granddaughter of prominent lawyer and politician Felix Grundy, in 1854. Stevenson's ties to Democrats reached back to Andrew Jackson, and he played a key role in winning the presidency for Polk. According to the *New York Times* obituary for Stevenson, Polk died in his arms.

2. John Catron (1786–1865), a Democrat and a close ally of Polk, was raised in Virginia and served under Andrew Jackson during the War of 1812. In 1815 he began a law practice in Sparta, Tenn.; he also served as state attorney at Sparta. He relocated to Nashville in 1818, then served as chief justice of the state supreme court, 1824–37. Named to the U.S. Supreme Court by Jackson on his last full day as president in 1837, Catron sat on that court until his death.

3. Polk, in October 1846, bought from John M. Bass the home of Bass's late father-in-law and Polk's legal mentor, Felix Grundy. It was located at 11 Vine Street (now 714 Church Street) in Nashville.

4. Word uncertain, light and blurred ink transfer.

5. Polk's law partner, 1822–24, and lifelong friend, Democrat Aaron V. Brown (1795–1859) served as U.S. representative from Tennessee, 1839–45; governor of Tennessee, 1845–47; and postmaster general, 1857–59. Born in Virginia, Brown lived much of his life, when not in office elsewhere, in Giles County, Tenn.

6. John M. Bass (1804–78), after selling Grundy's home to Polk, continued to live there as a renter. He also owned adjacent property.

7. Mason Vannoy (1790?–1863), a Nashville carpenter born in Kentucky, apparently owned a shop with either Miller Turbeville of Nashville or carpenter Calvin Turbeville of Nashville.

8. John M. Bass to Polk, April 10, 1847.

9. James M. Hughes (c. 1818–late 1860s?) was a Tennessee-born architect and carpenter. He operated a Nashville carpentry shop with George W. Smith known as Hughes & Smith and, in later years, as Smith & Hughes.

10. Enclosure not found.

11. Elizabeth Childress Stevenson (c. 1815–1849) had married Vernon K. Stevenson in Nashville in 1834. Like her first cousin Sarah Childress Polk, she was a Tennessee native and had attended Nashville's Belmont Domestic Academy.

FROM JAMES H. THOMAS¹

My Dear Sir,

Columbia, Tenn. Aug 10/47

Your favor of 26th ult. is received. I have made the arrangement in relation to the house & lot, & in accordance with your direction, I have this day drawn upon you at Washington at sight favor of S. A. [Hamsier]² cashier for \$1485 15/100 which draft³ I sold to the Union Bank⁴ at 1 pr. ct. premium receiving \$1500 therefor which sum I paid to L. J. Polk⁵ for the lot.

I send herein the deed to be signed by J. Knox Walker with W. H. Polk.⁶ To prevent all difficulty I got W. H. P. to warrant & sign the deed also. Have Knox to execute the deed and acknowledge it before a notary Public or a commissioner of deeds for Tenn. if you have one in Washington & send it to Col. Robt. Campbell⁷ for registration &c.

The other papers herein enclosed will explain themselves.⁸ They should be preserved with the deed.

I fear our Governor is beaten. This is trouble, & that we have lost the Legislature is not by any means consoling.⁹

JAMES H. THOMAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AEI and AE: received August 19, 1847; answered September 2, 1847; "Relates to my Private business;/conveyance of lot in Columbia Tennessee, to me, being the same on which Mrs. Jane Polk now resides./Encloses title papers relating to the same;/ Paid his draft \$1485.15 Augt. 26th 1847. . . . J.K.P."; "The Deed was acknowledged by *J. Knox Walker & Wm. H. Polk* before the Clerk of the District Court in this City on the 28th of Augt. 1847, and being certified for Registration; I this day enclosed it to *James H. Thomas* of Columbia Tennessee, to have it recorded in Maury County Ten; Sept. 2nd 1847."

1. A North Carolina native, Thomas (1808–76), after his admittance to the bar in 1831, practiced law in Columbia, Tenn., and served as state attorney general for the district including Maury County, 1836–42. In that post he prosecuted Polk's brother William H. Polk for the 1838 killing, in a duel, of attorney Richard H. Hays. Thomas sought to prosecute the defendant for murder, but the charge was reduced by a grand jury to assault and battery; William was subsequently convicted. (See letter and notes in John B. Hays to Polk, December 4, 1838.) In 1843 Thomas and James K. Polk became law partners. A Democrat, Thomas also served in the U.S. House, 1847–51 and 1859–61.

2. Text uncertain. The cashier's name has not been confirmed.

3. Thomas enclosed the bank draft. ADS. DLC–JKP. From Polk's AEsI on draft: "This draft was drawn to pay, for half the House & lot in Columbia Tennessee, on which Mrs. Jane Polk resides, which was sold to the Bank of Tennessee as the property of Wm. H. Polk, and by the Bank transferred to Lucius J. Polk. Mr. Thomas paid \$1500. to Lucius J. Polk, for the property, and

drew this draft on me, which with the premium thereon of 1. pr. ct. made that amt./Paid Augt. 26th 1847: J.K.P.”; “Paid Augt. 26th 1847; to Corcoran & Riggs—J.K.P.” Jane Knox Polk lived in the house where her son, now the president, had lived with her and his father, Samuel, between 1818 and 1824. It was located on Market Street in Columbia, which did not at the time have street numbers. The house, whose address is now 301 West 7th Street, is now owned by the state of Tennessee and operated by the James K. Polk Memorial Association as part of the James K. Polk Home and Museum.

4. Presumably Thomas refers to the Columbia branch of the Union Bank of Tennessee, headquartered in Nashville, which had been chartered in 1832.

5. Lucius J. Polk (1802–70), a son of William Polk of Raleigh, N.C., and a cousin of the president, moved from North Carolina to Tennessee in 1823 and established a plantation in Maury County. He served in the Tennessee Senate, 1831–33.

6. Joseph Knox Walker and William H. Polk. Walker (1818–63), known as Knox, was Polk’s nephew and a graduate of Yale College, New Haven, Conn. He studied law in Polk and Gideon J. Pillow’s Columbia office before becoming a partner, then serving as Polk’s private secretary during his presidency. Walker later served as a Democrat in the Tennessee Senate, 1857–59. William H. Polk (1815–62), the president’s only surviving brother, was a Columbia lawyer who served in the Tennessee House, 1841–45 and 1857–59, and in the U.S. House, 1851–53. In January 1845 Pres. John Tyler appointed him *chargé d’affaires* to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, but William declined the nomination. Renominated by his brother, the new president, William won Senate confirmation on March 13, 1845, and served as minister at Naples until 1847. From August 1847 until the war’s conclusion, he served with the rank of major in the Third Dragoon Regiment in the Mexican War. In 1838, in the case referred to in a note above, William was convicted on a charge of assault and battery. The indenture referred to in this letter, dated August 10, 1847, was subsequently signed by Walker and witnessed by William Brent, clerk of the circuit court of the District of Columbia, on August 28. DS. DLC–JKP. An AES by Maury County registrar John L. Miller, dated September 13, affirms his having recorded the document.

7. Robert Campbell (1797–1852), a first cousin of the president, served as his business agent in Columbia, Polk’s longtime home. Campbell was the son of John and Matilda Golden Polk Campbell. Though not in this letter, Campbell and others often used the suffix “Junior” to distinguish him from his uncle of the same name—until the uncle’s death on September 16, 1847, after which the nephew dropped the suffix. This series, for clarity, continues to refer to him as Robert Campbell, Jr.

8. Thomas enclosed another indenture, dated August 10 and signed by Lucius J. Polk, William H. Polk, and Francis G. Roche, cashier for the Bank of Tennessee branch at Columbia, acknowledging Polk’s payment and directing Walker to convey the property to Polk. DS. DLC–JKP.

9. The August 5, 1847, elections in Tennessee produced a flurry of Whig victories and Democratic defeats. Whig Neill S. Brown won the governorship—

in part by running against Polk's Mexican War policy—defeating Democratic incumbent Aaron V. Brown by 996 votes. The Whigs won control of both houses in the state legislature. The latter success led to John Bell's appointment to one of the state's two seats in the U.S. Senate. The Democrats retained their 6–5 majority in Tennessee's U.S. House delegation, though some newspapers erroneously reported otherwise.

FROM GEORGE FELIX¹

Dear Sir

Pittsburgh August 11th 1847

From the news to this date, of the glorious Achievements of our Arms at Mexico, a final termination may now reasonably be expected soon to take place of the difficulties heretofore existing between that Country & the United States: and as a recompense for our valorous and invincible Arms, that Country must be awarded by mass to the United States.

This being the inevitable Consequence and our beloved Country having again vindicated her just rights, under your prompt, efficient and successful Administration, the policy of which, its most avowed and inveterate enemies, if not publicly, at least tacitly, must and do approve, an Administration to which every true American Citizen must give the Appellation; the nursing father of the new world. Texas rescued from the Jaws of the old Lion² Stubborn Mexico almost subdued, will alike be under the roof and protection of this benign Government, the old Lion defeated in his Attempt to put his firm grasp upon the "lonely Star"³ is now beginning to stretch forth his paw toward the beautiful and fertile Island of Cuba, and snatch it from that Country, to which by nature it belongs and its Inhabitants anxious it should become its kindred.

This Island so flourishing under a Government like Spain, yielding to it annually a Revenue of Seven Millions of dollars and upwards—Under a Government like ours; having at its head an Executive to continue the present policy: and to carry out the true principles of the present Administration would become an Acquisition incalculably valuable.

I respectfully beg leave to request the present Administration to turn its Attention to, and keep a watchful eye upon (as it did upon Texas, now one of our Sister States) that invaluable Isle of Cuba. If this meet the approbation of your Excellency to take and adapt such measures and devise such means as may seem best calculated and most expedient to again defeat the ambitious designs of the insatiable ["old⁴ lion," to acquire by a purchase from Spain or otherwise the rich and valuable Isle of Cuba⁵ Spain as far as I can learn, will take one hundred Millions of Dollars.⁶

The whole of this Sume can be obtained from the Inhabitants of Cuba, they being anxious to be manumitted from Spain or emancipated⁷ in some way and brought under our Government.⁸

If any person familiar with the manners Customs and the vernacular tongue of the people of the Island (with the Credentials of your Excellency as to the probity and honesty of the person) were on the Island, such person could raise the efficient means to pay the purchase money in a short time. By reference to the most respectable Citizens throughout this Union if requisite; I am warranted to say—I possess all the above Qualifications. If the Scheme meet your Approbation and your Excellency be satisfied from the testimonials of Gentlemen of undoubted honour integrity, and veracity as to my honesty and Integrity and Qualifications for the enterprise and thereupon obtain your credentials I will Cheerfully undertake and as effectually as in my power employ all honourable means with dispatch *in propria persona*⁹ to accomplish the above Objects.

GEORGE FELIX

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Extensive searches failed to yield a certain identification of this letter's author, but possibly he was George R. Felix (1825–97), a Pennsylvania-born farmer and minister who, in 1850, lived in St. Clair Township, Bedford County, Penn.

2. By “the old Lion,” Felix refers to the British empire, which often was personified as a lion. Before Texas's annexation to the United States, pro-annexation Americans had feared that the United Kingdom would acquire either sovereignty or greater influence over the republic. The British government, anxious to maintain economic ties with cotton-producing Texas, had, in 1845, supported that republic's continued independence. It also had hoped that an independent Texas would limit U.S. expansion and thereby help establish a balance of power in North America.

3. By 1837 the “lone star” or, less often, “lonely star” had become a symbol of and nickname for the Texas republic. In 1839 its government adopted a national flag featuring a single star. Once admitted to the United States, Texas became known as the “Lone Star State.”

4. Opening quotation mark missing.

5. Advocates of U.S. annexation of Cuba of this era often argued that if the United States did not acquire the island, the government of Spain, which owned the island and was heavily in debt to the United Kingdom, might accept a deal from London whereby Spain's debt would be forgiven in exchange for title to Cuba. Defenders of slavery in the United States were particularly concerned that, if the island were acquired by the United Kingdom, which had abolished slavery in most of its empire in 1833, British abolitionists would successfully lobby their government to emancipate the slaves in Cuba.

Protestant Religion of the Bible. I am within the Theatres where that Bold, intrepid man of God—Martin Luther²—acted, and have recently visited a venerable cathedral near this city where “Luther” has stood & where his voice, like that of “Peter the Hermit,”³ rousing all Europe To thought and To action, has been heard, & which still contains an original painting of that extraordinary man.⁴

The North of Europe is a more interesting country, than our people generally suppose it to be. Not only is it interesting to the scholar & man of science on account of its Antiques & its Literature, but in my opinion its markets will become much more interesting to the commerce of our country, than heretofore, and I cannot help regarding the present as an auspicious period to employ the efforts of the government, through her agents in the north and northeast of Europe to secure, permanently to our commerce the benefits of these valuable markets. *First*, because the irresistible power of Truth upon that great question of “Free Trade”⁵—unrestricted commercial intercourse, as far as may be—between the different nations of the Earth, to whom God in his Providence has assigned different means of subsisting themselves, is rapidly gaining ground in this country, as well as in England, as the late valuable Treaty with Hanover⁶ & the recent elections in England⁷ most fully attest; and second, because the means for the Transportation of commerce by rail ways, and steam boats are rapidly multiplying in the North and North East of Europe, it will be but a few years at furthest untill our commerce can be taken up from any point on the North, south of the Elbe and deferred through Holland, Belgium, Prussia Austria, Bohemia, Russia Sweden & Denmark as also In the Hanseatic⁸ towns by rail roads, during that portion of the year when its further progress upon the North sea, through the sound & upon the Baltic is forbidden by Ice. I doubt not that the American line of steamers about being established between N York & Bremen⁹ will make a very favourable demonstration in behalf of our commerce in this quarters and I trust that, that line may soon be succeeded by others to the mouth of the Elbe.

This is a beautiful country. The feudal labour & drudgery of more than 2000 years has brought the country, the towns, the Palaces the castles & their environs to great perfection & beauty in the North of Europe. But here also is the place for the American citizen to “rejoice and be glad”¹⁰ that he is an American citizen. When he stands here and compares the institutions & the people, in their social & political condition which surround him, with the institutions & the people of his own country, when he sees the toiling thousands, with but little brighter aspirations, socially or politically than the landmarks & other fixtures upon the soil on which they labour & drudge, and contrasts them with

the noble institutions of his own country, institutions which generously clear from the path-way of the prompted citizen every obstacle to the attainment of the highest stations of honour & of influence both socially & politically, his heart beats high with emotions of gratitude & patriotism. Oh my dear sir it is no slight priviledge to be an American citizen. It is a blessing however we can scarcely appreciate until we stand at some point in civilized Europe and painfully witness still firmly fixed upon the people those old Baronial, Feudal institutions, scarcely (so far as Russia Austria, Prussia & Denmark are concerned) to this day mitigated or softened from their original severity.

The brilliant achievement of our arms in Mexico is most cheering to the hearts of all Americans on this side the Atlantic, but it is painful to me in a Foreign country to read from *Foreign Journals*, the direct “aid & comfort”¹¹ given by the Federal press of our own country to the enemy.¹²

I trust you will pardon me for intruding upon you this long letter, but I may find some Justification when you reflect, that I am here solitary, in a far country, Far from the scenes & tender associations of my Youth & early life, Far from my *family*, my friends & my country. But it is comfortable to reflect that I am not beyond the limits of that kind Providence which encompasses not only my country & friends, but “the ends of the Earth.”¹³ I hope you will find a leisure moment to write a few lines in reply, as you cannot imagine the comfort it would afford me here in my solitude. I pray you to remember me in all kindness to Mrs Polk, to Col Walker & his Lady, to Mr Buchanan and to Mr Walker.¹⁴

R. P. FLENNIKEN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received September 4, 1847.

1. Flenniken (1804–79), a lawyer, served in the Pennsylvania House, 1838 and 1840–41. He had long ties to James Buchanan and was instrumental in helping Polk, in the 1844 presidential election, to win Pennsylvania—particularly its western portion. In recognition of that assistance and on Buchanan’s recommendation, Polk, in January 1847, appointed Flenniken U.S. chargé d’affaires to Denmark, where he served June 12, 1847–c. September 15, 1849.

2. Martin Luther (1483–1546) was a German theologian widely regarded as the leader of the Reformation, a revolt by what were eventually called Protestant churches against the Catholic Church, headquartered in Rome. Flenniken’s allusion to Luther’s “rousing all Europe” refers to the theologian’s “Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences” (1517), a series of protests against the sale of indulgences by the Catholic Church that he affixed to the door of a church in Wittenberg, Saxony, an act often regarded as commencing the Reformation.

3. Peter the Hermit (c. 1050–1115) was a Catholic monk in what is now France who participated in the First Crusade (1096–99), during which

European Christians captured Jerusalem and other biblical places of the southern Levant, wresting them from Muslims. Following that crusade Jerusalem remained under the control of Christian overseers for two centuries before its reconquest by Muslim forces. Although Peter the Hermit played a key role in the First Crusade, he did not, as often depicted in literature and visual arts, lead the campaign.

4. Flenniken likely refers to the Church of Our Lady, in Copenhagen, which originally was constructed as a Catholic house of worship in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries but was adapted to Lutheranism in the sixteenth.

5. This term has been used since the sixteenth century.

6. The United States signed a treaty with Hanover, a kingdom that belonged to the German Confederation but that never joined the Zollverein, in June 1846. It was ratified in March 1847. The treaty clarified measures agreed to by the two governments in an 1840 treaty. Both agreements were concerned largely with trade reciprocity; each liberalized trade relations between the countries. In the 1846 treaty, the United States offered to enter identical agreements with other members of the German Confederation, which included all members of the Zollverein.

7. The United Kingdom held parliamentary elections in July–September 1847. They brought to Parliament a Whig majority and, as Flenniken here recognizes, a strong majority in favor of free trade. These elections followed the repeal, in June 1846, of a series of tariffs on imported grains known collectively as the Corn Laws. Their repeal was achieved by Conservative prime minister Sir Robert Peel, allied with modernizing forces within his own party, along with various Liberals and radicals within Parliament. In the wake of that victory, Peel's government, having lost many protectionist Conservative supporters, was replaced by a Whig government headed by Lord John Russell. Russell continued as prime minister after the 1847 elections.

8. Reference is to the Hanseatic League, an alliance, established for commercial and defensive purposes, of free towns in northern Europe. Formed in the middle of the fourteenth century, the alliance reached the zenith of its powers during the middle of the fifteenth.

9. Chartered in 1846 and organized in 1847, the Bremen Line, formally the Ocean Steam Navigation Company, headquartered in New York City, became the first U.S. steamship company to receive a U.S. government subsidy. The line was awarded a contract to carry U.S. mail twice a month between New York City and Bremen, in today's Germany. Two ships, the *Washington* and the *Hermann*, had been constructed to inaugurate the line, which was intended to compete with steamship companies, principally the Cunard Line, that received subsidies from the British government. Both American vessels offered passenger service and, on their Atlantic crossings, made stops at the Isle of Wight. The *Washington*, when it began sailing in 1847 from New York City to Southampton, England; Le Havre, France; and Bremen, became the first trans-Atlantic American mail steamer.

10. This phrase appears in Psalms 40:16, 70:4, 90:14, and 118:24 and in Lamentations 4:21. Slight variants appear in many books of the Bible.

11. Democrats used this phrase as a derogatory reference to Whigs who were opposing the war against Mexico. It derives from Article III, Section 3 of the Constitution, which defines treason as, among other actions, the giving of “Aid and Comfort” to the United States’ enemies.

12. Although the Federalist party had ceased to exist decades earlier, antebellum Democrats persisted in the use of “Federal” and “Federalist” as pejoratives for that day’s Whig party, widely regarded as the successor party of the Federalists. The usage underscored widespread popular equations between the earlier Federalists and antidemocratic biases allegedly held by Whigs. Moreover, during the Mexican War, Democrats, often attributing treasonous motives to Whig criticisms of the U.S. government’s war policies, linked such criticisms to Federalist participation in the Hartford Convention, of 1814–15. At that meeting, New England Federalists gathered out of opposition to the War of 1812 and Democratic-Republican president James Madison’s economic policies. The convention proposed several constitutional amendments. It did not call for New England’s secession from the Union, but some Federalists had suggested such a move. Thus, the convention soon became identified with treason and secession and discredited the Federalist party.

13. This phrase appears in many books of the Bible.

14. Sarah Childress Polk, Joseph Knox Walker, Augusta Adams Tabb Walker, James Buchanan, and Robert J. Walker. Augusta Adams Tabb (1824–60) married Joseph Knox Walker in 1841. Robert J. Walker (1801–69), a Pennsylvania native and a Democrat, practiced law there and in Mississippi before serving as a U.S. senator from Mississippi, 1836–45, and, under Polk, secretary of the Treasury, 1845–49.

FROM JEREMIAH GEORGE HARRIS¹

Dear Sir—

Norfolk Va Aug 11. 1847

Our ship² arrived on the 6th. We expected to go into dock for repairs. I have made all arrangements to proceed to Washington to-morrow in the hope that I could get permission to hasten to my family in Tennessee where I learn that my wife³ is quite ill. This morning I am grieved to the heart to learn that our ship is ordered to Boston and I must go with her. May I not hope that our old friendship will secure enough of your consideration to cause the Secretary⁴ to have me relieved so soon as our ship reaches Boston. We have seen some pretty hard service in the Gulf, and while nearly all the officers have left for their homes, I find that I am compelled to forego any such privilege. I should suppose that either Mr. Cutter or Mr. Slamm⁵ might relieve me, or, at least, that I might have leave for a week or two to visit my sick family.

J. GEO. HARRIS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received August 12, 1847; answered August 13, 1847; “Desires leave of absence to visit his sick family. His wife is died, but he had not heard of it.”

1. A New England Democrat, Harris (1809–1901) was associated with several Massachusetts and Connecticut newspapers before moving to Nashville and becoming editor of the *Union* there in 1839. In 1843 he became an agent of the United States for tobacco sales in Europe. In 1844 he authored a campaign biography of Polk; in 1845 Polk appointed him a navy purser. He remained in the navy until 1871.

2. Built in the New York Navy Yard, the 1,064-ton sloop of war *Albany* was commissioned in November 1846 and belonged to the Home Squadron.

3. Lucinda McGavock (1817–47), educated at the Nashville Female Academy, married Jeremiah George Harris in Nashville in 1842. She died there on June 23, 1847, seven weeks before her husband wrote this letter.

4. Secretary of the Navy John Y. Mason.

5. George F. Cutter and Levi D. Slamm. Massachusetts-born Cutter (1820–90) joined the navy in 1838 and became a purser in 1844. He served, eventually as commodore and paymaster general, until 1881. Slamm (1812–62) was appointed by Polk, in November 1846, a navy purser. Identified with prolabor politics and the Locofoco faction of New York’s Democratic party, Slamm had edited the *Daily Plebeian* (1842–45), a newspaper in New York City that had promoted workers’ rights and U.S. expansionism.

FROM GEORGE FELIX

Dear Sir

[Pittsburgh, c. August 12, 1847]¹

I take the liberty privately to State to your Excellency the motive, why I wish to undertake the purchasing of the Iland of Cuba. England is in the act of forcing Spain to relinquish that beautifull Island. The Cubans are dissatisfied about it not wishing to be under that Government. Their wish is that some private person should buy from Spain that Island, they offering to advance the whole sume untill our Government is willing and able to take it, under their care, as one of our Sister States. It belongs by right to the U.S.² Why should we not have it.

Another reason why i offer my Services, is, i am not healthy. A Sea voyage, would, i am confident restore my health. I am too poor to bear the Expenses. This way, i could restore my health and render essential Services to my Country.

[GEORGE FELIX]

AL. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “privation” on the cover. Washington Curran Whitthorne’s AE: “George Felix, Penna./about Cuba, advances the same ideas with M Y. Beach, Editor of N.Y Sun./Aug 14, 1847.”

1. Place and approximate date identified from postmark and through content analysis.

2. The view that, “by right,” Cuba belonged to the United States was widely held by U.S. expansionists; it reached back to the Early Republic and pronouncements made by political leaders including Presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe. Depending upon the speaker, that inferred right rested on the island’s sheer proximity to the United States, the fact that it was governed by a European power, or some combination of those rationales. By the 1840s Southern planter interests and their Northern allies were also vigorously arguing that Spain’s weakening hold on the island boded ill for the survival of its slave system. Without U.S. acquisition of Cuba, they argued, the island was likely to become a British possession under which slavery would be abolished—or, even worse from their viewpoint, with its majority-slave population, the island would become, like Haiti, a free black republic and thus a destination for runaway slaves from the American South.

TO JEREMIAH GEORGE HARRIS

My Dear Sir:

Washington City August 13th 1847

I received last evening, your letter of the 11th Instant, written at Norfolk. I had previously recived one from you written in the Gulf of Mexico,¹ and had made known to the Secretary of the Navy² your desire, to have leave of absence to visit your sick family. The Secretary at once assented to the propriety of granting your request, and you would have been addressed to that effect at Norfolk, if it had not become necessary, to send your ship³ to Boston, in consequence of the other vessel being in the dock at Norfolk. The Secretary will grant the leave of absence & will address you to that effect at Boston. It is My Dear Sir: at all times a painful task, to communicate to a friend melancholy news. The distressing bereavement which you have suffered, and of which you were not apprized when you wrote, must however be made known to you by some one. *Mrs. Harris*⁴ is no [more].⁵ She died a few weeks since. I have not been informed of the particulars of her last illness. You will of course desire to visit your home & see your child⁶ and other relations, and leave of absence will be granted you, for that purpose, for any reasonable time you may desire.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Boston.

1. Probably Harris to Polk, June 27, 1847, or possibly Harris to Polk, March 29, 1847.

2. John Y. Mason.

3. USS *Albany*.

4. Lucinda McGavock Harris.

5. Word uncertain, light ink transfer.

6. The Harrises had two children, Joseph E. (c. 1843–1865) and Lucie (1846–1906), both born in Nashville.

FROM THOMAS B. CHILDRESS

U.S. Ship Jamestown
Norfolk Harbour [Va.] August 14th 1847

Dear Sir

Having promised you that I would inform you previous to my resigning, and having determined to resign within a few days, I write you these few lines in haste, informing you of the same. And I can only say that I shall consider nearly two years of my life thrown away, for had it not been for the Navy, I should have now been in some business. But as it is I shall have, to go back, and commence anew. And as it regards a midshipman's life, I consider it, as one of the most laborious and depending¹ situations, in which, a man can be placed. And I do regret exceedingly, that I had not resigned last summer, which I certainly should have done, had it not been for the expectation of being permitted to remain 12 months at the Naval School.

T. B. CHILDRESS

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received August 17, 1847.

1. Childress probably employs a now-obsolete usage of "depending" for "dependent" or "subordinate."

FROM DAVID B. FOWLER¹

Laguna² Look out House, at the Point.
the 14th of August 1847

Excellency:

We will further race the subject of this infernal business, and make it our last letter at present. Your Excellency will see from the letters I have already written,³ that I have been denied the right of Justice in every instance; and it would be a hard matter to join titles in two languages to express all what I have been obliged to submit to, since crossing the river "Rio-Grande." Were I to give you a full detail of my sufferings during my long confinement and at many others different times, it would be deemed incredible, unless you have had the misfortune to have experienced incarceration among those peoples.⁴ Even in its mildest shape it is worst than in any other civilized Nation. Had I not been blessed with an Iron constitution, and a flow of spirits difficult to be subdued, and had I not received some benevolent succours from "Mr. Decoying," American Merchant in Mexico, and likewise the widow "Wiley"⁵ I must inevitably have perished; but let us forbear to dwell on this painfull subject longer, the thoughts of which fills me with horror and conflicting emotions.

I did not come home at that time, not wishing to come pennyless, and the result has been further trouble and not the least replenish to my purse, and by those means I very nearly have travelled this Mexico, and it must amount to much more than what I can say at present; however I can say with the clear sentiment, that my acquaintances does not extend with that quite class of populus as I did intend for; but as to rank, nobility, I dont mention, I am very popular, exceedingly much, such as Alcades,⁶ Prefects, Captains, Colonels, Generals, Governors, Priests, quartets & City-Gaols; my introductions into those last named Gentlemen, has been tremendous: frequently taken up for a spy, and very often arrested on my passport, ascerting it to be a forged one, and at other times defective, pretending to write back from whence it came, to see whether it was genuine: during this time I would be introduce to one of those last named Gentlemen.

I may say I will forward on, those letters, to the Government; then you will be apprised of my wrongs, & proposing at the same time, when I get funds sufficient to pass at different parts of this Country and of the United States, to get private letters from many witnesses to substantiate what I have written; and my reason for not sending a copy of those circumstances, to my Government, long before this, was to obtain the declarations that had been sworn against me, and at the same time thinking it was better for me to pass on to the City of Washington: but now I am convinced I can never obtain those declarations; and I am also very sorry I cannot give you a full Copy of Gens. Ampudia & Arista, Tornel⁷ and Santa-Anna's private Secretary letters, but there will be a time I hope, when I can lay them before the publick.

It is imposible for me to come to the seat of the Government at present, as I am in his⁸ employ, at this place, to signalize the Vessels. I may further say, if any misfortune should happen, that I never reach the City of Washington you more then do me justice; you have my protest from my own hand,⁹ calling on Captain McGruder, Commander of the Bumb Brig "Vesuvius," & Governor of this Department,¹⁰ to whom I have remitted it for the American Seal.

DAVID B. FOWLER¹¹

ALS. DNA-RG 76. Addressed to "Honorable James K. Polk, President of the United States of North America." From William Hunter, Jr.'s¹² AE at top of letter: received, presumably at the U.S. State Department, September 20, 1847. From Hunter's AE on cover: Fowler's claim, probably with this letter, "recd in Roll office from Mr Hunter Sept 24 1847."

1. Ending a longstanding ban on foreign traders in Mexico, the newly created Republic of Mexico had, in 1838, opened the country to American traders.

Fowler, apparently a trader and a U.S. citizen (the text beneath this letter's signature suggests that he was born in Delaware), numbered among fourteen U.S. citizens or Texans of U.S. origins who were captured by Capt. Enrique Villarreal, of the Mexican army, near the Nueces River in December 1840. The captured men apparently had been found on Villarreal's ranch, a vast tract of land lying between the Nueces and Corpus Christi Bays. Matters were complicated by Mexico's never having recognized the Republic of Texas and by the longstanding dispute between Texans and Mexico's government over whether the Nueces River or the Rio Grande marked Texas's southwestern boundary. Furthermore, the capture of the interlopers occurred during a period of domestic political and military turmoil within the Mexican republic. Fowler's detainment typified the ongoing U.S.-Mexico tensions that sparked the Mexican War or—from another perspective—served, along with similar episodes, as a rationale for the U.S. instigation of that war. The precise date and circumstances of his release remain unclear. By July 1848 he was employed in the U.S.-run Veracruz Customs House.

2. "Laguna" refers to Laguna de Términos, a series of marshes and lagoons, bordered on the south by the mainland and on the north mostly by the island of Carmen, in the peninsular state of Yucatán in Mexico's southeast. That state, amid ongoing conflict with Mexico's central government since the late 1830s, had declared its independence twice and remained neutral during most of the war between Mexico and the United States.

3. Letters not found.

4. The U.S. government's Mexican Claims Commission obtained (along with this letter; Fowler's enclosed letter to Juan Bautista Traconis Rodríguez; and U.S. consul at Laguna de Términos Eneas McFaul, Jr.'s November 3, 1846, letter to Polk) a statement of account, dated August 14, 1847, in which Fowler claims that the Mexican government and various individuals owe him \$38,908. This sum includes the value of stolen livestock, cash, arms, and clothing, plus "Damages for five hundred days imprisonment and detention" and \$323 "for my Services in the Mexican Navy." ADS. DNA-RG 76.

5. These two names may be pseudonyms. Neither individual has been identified.

6. The *alcalde*, in a Mexican town, served as its chief executive and judicial officer.

7. Pedro de Ampudia y Grimarest, Mariano Arista, and José María de Tornel y Mendivil. Ampudia (1803 or 1805–1868), born in Cuba, served in Spain's military until joining Mexico's after it achieved independence in 1821. He led Mexican troops in the Texas war for independence and the war with the United States. Like Arista, General Ampudia commanded Mexico's Army of the North for part of 1846. Tornel (1789, 1795, or 1797–1853), a Mexican politician, general, and author, served as governor of the Federal District, 1826–28, 1829, 1834, and 1847, in which capacity he tried, unsuccessfully, to defend Mexico City against U.S. forces. He also served as minister to the United States, 1830–31, and minister of war and navy, 1833, 1835–37, 1838–39, 1841–44, 1846, and 1853.

8. The letter presents no identifiable antecedent for "his."

9. Fowler apparently enclosed a copy of his letter to the governor of Tabasco, Juan Bautista Traconis Rodríguez, dated September 15, 1846, in which he accuses the people of Frontera and Tabasco of anti-American prejudice, the government of corruption, and the law system of injustice. He claims to “have been . . . unjustly treated and cruelly persecuted; and . . . rob by your Government.” Beneath the letter he wrote, “The result of this letter was that I had to leave the place forthwith.” ALS, copy. DNA–RG 76.

10. George A. Magruder (1799–1871), of Virginia, joined the navy in 1817 and attained the rank of commander in 1843 (despite Fowler’s use of the term, he was not promoted to captain until 1855). Built in 1845 as the *Saint Mary*, the ship Fowler mentions was acquired by the navy in 1846 and soon renamed the *Vesuvius*; it was the second naval ship by that name. The bomb brig, under Magruder’s command, reached Laguna de Términos in March 1847. In May Cdre. Matthew C. Perry appointed Magruder governor of the city of Carmen and the surrounding area; the *Vesuvius* spent most of the remainder of the war at Laguna de Términos, though it participated in the 1847 captures of the cities of Tuxpan and Tabasco. In May 1848 Magruder took command of the USS *Union*, posted at Philadelphia; he resigned from the navy in 1861. The navy sold the *Vesuvius* in October 1848.

11. Fowler wrote beneath his signature, “Born in sight of the Capes of Delaware.”

12. Rhode Island–born William Hunter, Jr., (1805–86)—not to be confused with his father, a lawyer, U.S. senator, and diplomat—practiced law in New Orleans and Providence, R.I., before becoming, in 1829, a U.S. State Department clerk. He was reputedly possessed of a prodigious memory; as his knowledge of U.S. diplomatic affairs steadily accrued, his influence in the State Department rose commensurately. He became its chief clerk in the early 1850s and served in that department—eventually becoming second assistant secretary of state—until his death.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL¹

Dear Sir

Bolivar [Tenn.]² Augt 18. 1847

Enclosed I hand you a bond for your signature.³ The price \$3.00 looks low for land so near a town but I assure you it is the best offer by one Dollar per Acre that I have had for 12 months. I thought it advisable to make the trade on time rather than not at all. The one & two years might have passed & still found you owning the land & not able to get any more on the same time. The Notes will be promptly met at maturity. There is still remaining about 56 acres of this land which I believe I will be able to dispose of in a few days. This Communication has been delayed about ten days hoping to close the sale & send both bonds at one time.

I have not yet Found the Deeds from R I Cheter⁴ for the Dyer Co lands nor have I had any offers to purchase them.⁵

We all feel badly whipped in the late Elections. Such a result was unlooked for by all parties. The democrats were too sanguine. Had the whole vote of this County⁶ been polled the democratic majority would have been 100 more than it is. Within the last two or three days the [heated]⁷ question as to the Representatives from this Congressional District has been Settled in Stanton's⁸ favor by 37 votes a close rub & a great less in the last Election.

E P McNEAL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: "Recd. Augt. 29th 1847: Informs me that he has sold 160 acres of my land near Bolivar for \$480., and encloses a title Bond for me to sign. The Bond is dated 5th Augt. 1847. Three notes taken by him for the considration of the land are for \$240. each, one due on the 5th of Augt. 1848, and the other 5th Augt. 1849. I executed the title Bond to day, and returned it to Majr. *McNeal*. Ansd. Augt. 30th 1847."

1. A first cousin of Polk, McNeal (1804–86) was a merchant and land agent in the town of Bolivar, in southwestern Tennessee. He managed Polk's business affairs in the area.

2. State identified from Polk's AE and through content analysis.

3. Enclosure not found.

4. Robert I. Chester (1793–1892), Andrew Jackson's son-in-law, was born in Pennsylvania but lived most of his life in Tennessee. A merchant and speculator, he served as surveyor of Smith County, 1822; postmaster at Jackson, 1825–33 and 1836–37; and U.S. marshal for the state's western district, 1838–49 and 1853–57. He farmed in Texas, 1835–36, and raised a regiment for its war for independence but not in time to join the fighting. (Earlier volumes of this series erroneously identify Chester as Robert J. Chester.)

5. McNeal refers to two tracts of land in Dyer County, Tenn., that Polk purchased from Joseph Knox Walker, through Chester, in 1846. The president requests their sale in Polk to McNeal, April 15, 1847.

6. Hardeman County, Tenn.

7. Word uncertain.

8. A Memphis lawyer, Frederick P. Stanton (1814–94) served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1845–55, and as governor of Kansas Territory, 1858–61. In the August 1847 race referred to herein, Stanton narrowly defeated Whig John W. Harris.

TO JOHN Y. MASON

Sir.

Washington Aug 18 1847

You are hereby appointed Acting Secretary of War, to perform the duties of that Office during the temporary absence of the Secretary of war¹ from the seat of Government.

JAMES K POLK

N, probably copy. DNA-RG 92. From William A. Gordon's AE: received August 18, 1847.

1. William L. Marcy left Washington City for New York, to tend to his own ill health and to visit his ill mother, Ruth Learned Marcy, on August 18, 1847. He returned to the capital on September 18. See also Polk to James Buchanan, September 2, 1847.

FROM WILLIAM S. CASSEDY¹

Dear Sir

Meadville [Miss.]² Aug 19 1847

It has been my intention for some time to write a History of "*Polk his Cabinet and Administration*" for which purpose I am engaged in the collection of such documents and other material as are necessary and proper for the adequate accomplishment of such an important undertaking.

I am induced to believe, from the eminent position you occupy as the head of the government as well as from your personal influence, that you possess eminent ability to furnish the statistical and political information necessary to the compilation of a work which proposes giving a history of your eventful Administration; this I hope will excuse the liberty I take in addressing you.

I consider the Tariff,³ the Warehousing system,⁴ the Subtreasury,⁵ the Oregon Treaty,⁶ the Mexican War and the Annexation of Texas all effected during your Administration (except the last named measure) marks with distinctive and unmistakable features your's to be the most important administration since that of Mr Jefferson's,⁷ if not the most important one since the foundation of the Government. Measures so important to the destiny of the Republic, so fruitful in their consequences already that unborn generations must feel their importance, demand the Genius Talants and energies of one as their Historian, better qualified for the task than I can claim to be.

But having embarked on this "sea of troubles"⁸ I am resolved to steer my bark for "the point proposed"⁹ in which voyage if I am engulfed or founder I hope the consequences may not be felt by any one.

I design discussing the state of parties on the accession of Genl. Harrison and the causes which led to that result, the Administration of John Tyler,¹⁰ the state of parties, of the country (and as far as may be) of the departments of Government when he went out of office, the Baltimore Convention which resulted in your nomination for the Presidency,¹¹ and then in detail the prominent acts of your Administration, in which at some length I intend displaying the workings of the present Tariff with useful statistical information in illustration. Also Biographies of the Lives of each of the Secretaries comprised in your cabinet which will

contain their prominent political acts and such incidents of their private lives as would tend to instruct and interest. A Biography of yourself which will contain your political career (anterior to your accession to the Presidential chair) and a full account of the prominent acts of your administration together with such incidents of your private life of such a character that the delicacy of the most fastidious it is believed will have no occasion to take offence; each of these Biographies to be illustrated by a steel plate engraving of the person of the subject of it. In addition I design a Biography and portrait of the person who may be the Democratic candidate for the Presidency the ensuing term: the work will be ready for press by the time the meeting of the Convention¹² takes place and will be struck off as soon afterwards as the Biography and portrait of the nominee can be furnished, and the work will be before the people by the time the canvass commences.

You Sir cannot fail to perceive the difficulties any one must labor under (to say nothing of the insufficiencies of the work itself) without the assistance derived from such documents as must be useful in its compilation; documents having direct relation with the Administrations of Van Buren,¹³ Harrison Tyler and your own would be eminently useful. Doubtless you have at your command many documents which you might furnish me with which would essentially aid me in my undertaking. I know that it would be asking too great a sacrifice of your valuable time to ask for a Biography of your life or for the facts from which one might be written. I have a Biography of your life in my possession but do not know what reliance to put in its authenticity¹⁴; should you be able to spare the leisure time from the performance of your arduous duties and find it convenient to furnish the Biography spoken of or the facts upon which one could be written it would be deemed an invaluable acquisition to the work. If however the Biography or material for one is not furnished, either from motives of delicacy, want of time or for any other reason you would confer a great kindness upon the writer by informing him to that effect so that he may be apprized in time to have it furnished from some other source. If procured from another source it should be submitted to your inspection if required before publication.

The designs I have in view in writing the work is primarily that it may serve as a useful *Manual* to the Democratic Politicians in all parts of the country in the canvass of 1848, to show the results to the welfare of the country of your democratic Administration, and secondly as a history to survive that era. I propose arranging the Statistical & political facts & truths to be contained in the work as will render them of easy reference, and desire the facts and truths themselves to be of such a character as will tend to elevate the Administration (as high as

such facts may assist in doing) in the opinion of the country and to be an auxilliary in the elevation of the Presidential candidate to office. Also I design the work for popular use which I shall endeavour to make so by its style, size & arrangement. Facts and measures which have had their existence and adoption with the Administration so collected and condensed as to show their results and the influence they have had & may have on the permanent prosperity of the country, such a work in the opinions of men of Judgment in such matters would be valuable to the politician and of use among the people. I have been residing in N Orleans the past winter and spring where I had many facilities afforded me in the prosecution of my design, but no information derived from any other source would be so valuable to me as such as could be furnished me doubtless from Washington, in fact it would be a desideration in the execution of my plan were I able to reside at Washington until its fulfillment. Such not being the case I am constrained to write where I am at present or in N Orleans, but here for sometime. I have addressed a letter of a similar character as this to Mr R. J Walker¹⁵ Sec. Treasury & for the same purpose. Hoping you will be so kind as to furnish me such information as will be useful to me and convenient to yourself, . . .

W. S. CASSEDY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received September 3, 1847.

1. Cassedy (c. 1822–?) was apparently a Pennsylvania-born lawyer, living in Meadville, Miss., and, the previous winter and spring, in New Orleans. He was probably a Freemason. So far as is known, he never published a book on Polk. For discussion of early biographers of Polk and accounts of his presidency, see Tom Chaffin, introduction to Volume 12 of this series, pp. xxxv, xxxviii, xlviii–xlix.

2. State identified from postmark.

3. In 1846 Polk won widespread praise among his supporters—particularly Southern agrarian interests—for orchestrating congressional passage of and, on July 30, signing into law what became known as the Walker Tariff, Treasury Secretary Robert J. Walker having played a key role in shaping the legislation. “An Act reducing the Duty on Imports, and for other Purposes.” *SL*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 74. The Walker Tariff substantially reduced rates on most imports and effectively rescinded an earlier measure, known by its critics as the Black Tariff. Passed in 1842 by a Whig-dominated Congress and reluctantly signed by Pres. John Tyler, that earlier legislation had enjoyed strong support from Northern industrialists; it imposed stiff protectionist tariffs on imports of manufactured goods.

4. Polk, on August 6, 1846, signed a law creating a system of government-run warehouses to store imported goods with tariffs due (or whose importers requested storage). “An Act to establish a Warehousing System, and to amend

an Act entitled ‘An Act to provide Revenue from Imports, and to change and modify existing Laws imposing Duties on Imports, and for other Purposes.’” *SL*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 84.

5. A key component of Polk’s domestic agenda, the Independent Treasury system, which Polk also signed into law on August 6, 1846, required that all federal funds be retained in the U.S. Treasury building and various federal sub-treasuries scattered across the country. The legislation stipulated that all funds going in and out of the system be in specie. Privately owned banks were excluded from those transactions. “An Act to provide for the better Organization of the Treasury, and for the Collection, Safe-Keeping, Transfer, and Disbursement of the public Revenue.” *SL*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 90.

6. The Buchanan-Pakenham Treaty, also known as the Oregon Treaty, in 1846 resolved rival claims by the United States and the United Kingdom in the Oregon Country, which included today’s Pacific Northwest region of the United States and Canada’s province of British Columbia. It set the boundary mostly at the 49th parallel but left Vancouver Island to the British.

7. Politician, author, lawyer, and planter Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826) was the principal author of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, 1776; Virginia governor, 1779–81; minister to France, 1785–89; U.S. secretary of state, 1790–93; vice president, 1797–1801; and president, 1801–9.

8. This quotation is from Hamlet’s soliloquy in William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, act 3, scene 1.

9. Cassius speaks this phrase in Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, act 1, scene 2, referring to the destination of a swimming race between him and Caesar.

10. Reference is to a period, between March 1841 and March 1845, during which two Whigs, William Henry Harrison and John Tyler, successively held the presidency. A Virginia native, Harrison (1773–1841) served in the army, 1791–98 and, as a general, 1812–14. As governor of Indiana Territory, 1801–13, he famously defeated Indians under Tecumseh at the Battle of Tippecanoe in 1811. He later served as U.S. representative from Ohio, 1816–19; U.S. senator from Ohio, 1825–28; and minister to Colombia, 1828–29. Inaugurated as president on March 4, 1841, he died one month later, leading Vice President Tyler to assume the nation’s highest office. Virginia-born politician and lawyer Tyler (1790–1862) served in the U.S. House, 1816–21; as Virginia governor, 1825–27; and in the U.S. Senate, 1827–36. Elected vice president on the Whig ticket in 1840, he succeeded to the presidency in April 1841 and served until Polk’s inauguration in 1845. A Democrat for much of his career, although by 1840 nominally a Whig, Tyler, as president, won widespread scorn among Whigs by supporting the annexation of Texas. He launched a third-party candidacy for reelection in 1844 but withdrew before the election.

11. Democratic National Convention of 1844.

12. Here Cassedy refers to the Democratic National Convention of 1848, held in Baltimore on May 22–26, at which the party nominated Lewis Cass as its presidential nominee.

13. Martin Van Buren.

14. Cassedy possibly refers to Polk’s official 1844 campaign biography, authored by Jeremiah George Harris and published in ten parts in the Nashville

Union and, subsequently, in other newspapers. That work has been republished as *Polk Campaign Biography* (Knoxville: Tennessee Presidents Trust, 1990).

15. Robert J. Walker.

FROM EDWARD HARDEN¹

Respected Sir: Athens, Georgia. 21st August 1847

I take the liberty of calling your attention, to the marked paragraphs, of the paper: herewith enclosed.² It is edited by a son-in-law of the collector of Savannah, who lives in the same house with his father-in-law.³ It is not a selected paper—I barely happened to pick it up.

My son Colonel Edward Randolph Harden,⁴ writes me, “I am taking the stump in every direction, and have recently published in the ‘Georgia Pioneer,’⁵ a long article under my proper signature in defence of the administration: the democrats are delighted with it, and the whigs are abusing me for it.” Poor fellow he was turned out of the custom-house by Mr. Bulloch, who said he could not make a place even for his own son,⁶ as he was obliged to give three persons places in the custom-house who had obtained the office for him, by their false complaints, and informations, against me: thus rewarding them for their perfidy, at my expense.⁷ All that I say I can prove. But I presume your knowledge of me now, is sufficient to render my assertions undoubted.

We are in the midst of a hard canvass for the next Governor and Legislature, as you will perceive by the papers; both parties are sanguine of success. I think the result very doubtful. The election of both Senators in Congress hang upon it.⁸

Please present my most respectful compliments to your excellent Mrs. Polk.

EDWARD HARDEN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked “Unofficial” on the cover.

1. Harden (1784–1849), a Georgia planter, soldier, and lawyer, lived at times in Savannah and in Athens. He served in the state senate and, in the mid-1840s, as customs collector at Savannah. He became appraiser there shortly before his death.

2. Harden enclosed two clippings from the Savannah *Daily Republican*, one about the dispute between Polk and William L. McCalla and one about the Whig victories in Tennessee’s legislative elections and the near-certain victory of Whig gubernatorial candidate Neill S. Brown. The latter carries the subtitle “Mr. Polk’s Own State Repudiates Him.” DLC–JKP.

3. Soldier and engineer Joseph L. Locke (c. 1810–1864), an 1828 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy who resigned from the army as a first lieutenant in 1836, edited the Savannah *Daily Republican* (which had been established

in 1802 as the *Georgia Republican & State Intelligencer*), 1840–53. He had served in the Seminole wars and was a Confederate officer in the Civil War. He was married to Laura Jane Bulloch Locke, whose father, William B. Bulloch (1776–1852), Polk appointed customs collector at Savannah (a post he had held decades earlier) in 1845, replacing Edward Harden; Bulloch served until 1849. A Savannah lawyer, a major slaveholder, and a War of 1812 veteran—and a great-uncle of Theodore Roosevelt—William B. Bulloch had become U.S. attorney for Georgia in 1804 and Savannah mayor in 1809. He had served in both houses of the Georgia legislature and as a Democratic Republican in the U.S. Senate, 1813. He was president of the state bank, 1816–43.

4. Edward Randolph Harden (1815–84) was a Georgia lawyer and telegraph operator who, during the 1850s, moved to Nebraska Territory, where, c. 1854–60, he sat on the territorial supreme court. If he served in the Savannah Customs House, as his father indicates, preceding William B. Bulloch's 1845 appointment, his tenure began after September 1843.

5. The *Georgia Pioneer* was a weekly newspaper published in Cassville. (The county seat of what was then Cass County—renamed Bartow County in 1861—Cassville was burned by the army of Gen. William T. Sherman during the Civil War and is no longer incorporated.)

6. William J. Bulloch (c. 1818–c. 1866), William B. Bulloch's son, by 1860 had become a Savannah banker and slaveholder.

7. Harden apparently refers to three of the four men who held office in the Savannah Customs House in September 1845, under Collector William B. Bulloch, but who had not in September 1843. William Mackay (1804–59) was naval officer in 1845 and an appraiser two years later; he held the latter post until 1849. Born in Savannah, he was a merchant and planter there. The other three were inspectors in 1845 and 1847 but no longer in September 1849. Joseph Felt (1788–1861), a native of Wrentham, Mass., and a veteran of the War of 1812, moved to Savannah about 1814. There he became an officer in the Lutheran church and, for the last thirty-four years of his life, superintendent of its Sunday school. Levi (or Levy) J. Myers (c. 1812–1856?), born in Savannah, was a Chatham County (likely Savannah) apothecary in 1850. Abial Winn (1815–74) was a native of and a planter in Liberty County, Ga. He was a militia captain in the Liberty Independent Troop, 1842–45.

8. In Georgia's elections of October 4, 1847, Whigs won a majority in each house of the state legislature but Democrat George W. Towns won the governorship. On November 19 the legislature appointed Whig U.S. senator John Macpherson Berrien to another term and Whig William C. Dawson to a term as senator beginning in 1849.

FROM ROBERT WICKLIFFE¹

Sir

Lexington [Ky.]² Augst 22nd 1847

Having learnt (not from my son³) but from rumour that he has Tendered his resignation, to take effect in Sepr. next and that an appointment will be made to fill the mission to Sardinia on or before

that time, I hasten to recommend for the office of *charge* to *Sardinia*, (should it be true that the office will be vacant) Major John Rowan⁴ of Bardstown, of this State, as a person well qualified for and deserving the office. Mr Rowan is a Gentleman in the prime of life of fine person & accomplished manners & Education and of a perfectly fair character, is well known & very popular in Kentucky Having filled among other offices *in the State*, that of Representative in her Legislature. His education has been good. In his conduct & bearing in society he is both dignified and bland. He has been raised in the Society of Catholics *very much*, & although not a catholic himself It is said his lady⁵ is of a catholic family & he has always been a favorite with that society, as was his late father The Honble John Rowan.⁶ I mention this fact as one entitled to much weight in selecting a minister to a Court *so catholic as that of Sardinia*. Indeed I am proud to believe that the present minister owes much of the goodwill which the people & court of Sardinia bear to him and *at present* to his Government, to the kind feelings he enjoyed on the part of the catholics, in Kentucky. Should Mr Rowan, be selected as far as the sollicitudes of the body of catholics in Kentucky Can aid the minister it will be made known to & duly appreciated at Sardinia. For they were so presented & so received in favour of the present minister. Mr. Rowan & Mr Rowans father have always been the friends of general Jackson⁷ & of yourself & he may be, by you confided in, not only from his honourable & unblemished integrity but trusted for his personal & ancestral friendships for you the success of your administration. Mr Rowan although ardent & decided in his politicks, has so far as I have ever known never made an enemy on account of politicks, & his late election to the Legislature proves how well he stands with all parties, for he (as a democrat) was returned from the county of Nelson to the Legislature against a dead majority of eight hundred votes. No man whig or democrat can or will object to his appointment. The catholics society throughout america so far as he is or shall be known will hail his appointment as in some measure a disposition on the part of the executive to gratify their fair claims to a representation in feeling as well as principles, to their catholic Brethren of the old world. Mr rowan is not only popular but believed & his appointmt rely on it, will be gratifying to all parties especially to the whole democracy⁸ & to no one will it be more so, than *sir* to

ROBERT WICKLIFFE

PS Please' to consider this eithe Publick or private. RW

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received August 27, 1847. Polk's AE: "*Private*."

1. Born in Pennsylvania and raised there and in Kentucky, Robert Wickliffe (1774–1859) became a prominent Kentucky lawyer. He served as U.S. attorney for Kentucky, 1813–20, and many terms in the state house and senate between 1802 and the 1830s.

2. State identified from Joseph Knox Walker's AE.

3. Robert Wickliffe, Jr., (c. 1816–1850) of Lexington, Ky., served in the Kentucky House, 1832 and 1835–37, and as chargé d'affaires to Sardinia, 1843–48. He asked to be recalled late in 1847 and Polk granted the request.

4. John Rowan, Jr., (1807–55) a Kentucky farmer and Democrat, served in the Kentucky House in 1839 and was again elected to that body shortly before Robert Wickliffe wrote this letter. Polk appointed him chargé d'affaires to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies—not Sardinia—in 1848. He served until about 1850.

5. Rebecca B. Carnes (1813–97), daughter of Peter A. and Mary Eden Briscoe Carnes, was born in Baltimore and married John Rowan, Jr., in 1835. The Rowans operated a Mississippi plantation before settling on a Nelson County, Ky., farm.

6. Lawyer, judge, and politician John Rowan, Sr., (1773–1843), born in Pennsylvania, moved to Kentucky around 1783 and became one of its leading citizens. After establishing a law practice in Louisville, he served, in 1799, as a delegate to the second state constitutional convention. Over the years he held various posts in the state government's executive, legislative, and judicial branches. He served in the U.S. House, 1807–9, and, as a Jacksonian, in the U.S. Senate, 1825–31.

7. Polk's political mentor, Andrew Jackson (1767–1845) served in the U.S. House, 1796–97; in the U.S. Senate, 1797–98 and 1823–25; and as governor of Florida Territory, 1821. Hailed as a hero for his triumphant leadership at the Battle of New Orleans in 1815, he served as the first Democratic president, 1829–37.

8. Common antebellum epithet for the Democratic party.

TO AARON V. BROWN

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Augt. 23d 1847

I need not say to you how much I was surprised and how deeply I regret the result of the late political contest in Tennessee.¹ All the letters which I recived from the state expressed great confidence in your success, by a largely increased vote, and I did not doubt it, up to within two days of the election. About that time I thought I saw indications that a quiet and desperate effort would be made by our opponents, and I feared that our friends were so confident of success that they might not make the proper exertions to bring out their whole strength. I feared too that in some of the Counties and districts votes would be swapped, to your prejudice, and in favour of local candidates. In

my old Congressional District I have no doubt the unfortunate contest between *Thomas* and *Gordon*² must have reduced your vote several hundreds. In *Andrew Johnson's*³ District too, there were objections to *men*, and local difficulties, which must have seriously diminished your vote. I cannot look with any patience upon the folly of our friends in *Greene* and some other Counties, by which their real strength, if they had been united and acted in harmony, was frittered away. To these causes I mainly attribute the result. The contest was looked upon, in every part of the Union, with unusual interest, and though defeated, all concede that you performed your part ably, and nobly. The truth is the parties in the State are so equally divided, that too much confidence or too little exertion, or seemingly trifling local difficulties on either side, will at any time determine the result. I suffered defeat twice in the State,⁴ and I always attributed it, to such local troubles and collisions among our friends. You had all the issues and all the patriotic feeling of the country with you, and though the result has been against you, by a very close vote, you have added much to your reputation *throughout the Union*. It was not until to night that I was satisfied that *Stanton*⁵ had been elected from the Memphis District by a very close vote. This is not so surprising, as we knew there were a few dissatisfied leading men in that quarter, who were probably luke-warm and indifferent in the contest. I rejoice that he is elected. More probably depended upon that election than that of any other single Representative in the Union. It gives to the Democracy a majority of the Tennessee Delegation: and I understand from those who have looked into the matter, that in the event the Presidential election, should unfortunately devolve on the Ho. Repts.,⁶ the vote of Tennessee will decide it, the other States being equally divided between the parties. Had the Federal party carried that District, they would in all probability have shaped their course, by running both *Clay* and *Taylor*⁷ in different states, with a view to throw the choice on the House. These are my speculations and I think they are well founded. Present appearances indicate that *Mr Clay* may be their candidate again. A few months more will shew. That he is their choice there is no doubt, and if they do not run him, it will be because they fear his want of *availability*. Our Democracy ought not to be deceived about *Genl. Taylor's* politics. There can be no doubt, that he is a Whig of decided and violent feelings. The idea that he is to be taken up as a *no-party* man, and voted for as such is worse than ridiculous, and yet if that idea is permitted to run on much longer, there is danger that some of the honest men of our party, may be deceived and led astray. Our motto should be "principles not men." Adhering to precept and the usages of the party, we should boldly hold the position that we will support the

nominee of the Democratic convention. I have no personal interest more than any other citizen in the next election, for with my own free and voluntary consent, I will retire to private life, at the close of my term. I desire however to see my principles continue to be in the ascendant in the country, and the only way by which this can be done, will be to wash our hands of all *professed no-party candidates*, and support the Democratic nominee of the convention. Who he is to be, no one can now tell, but I have confidence that our party will ultimately harmonize & present, an acceptable-man, whose political opinions and principles are such, as the great Democratic party will approve.

I suppose that our opponents in Tennessee, will have a contest, perhaps an angry one, about the Senator. Our party in the Legislature, being in the Minority will have no power further than to choose between different men of their opponents. I think it likely that they will be disposed to cast *Jarnagin*⁸ aside. In that event, if he can carry a portion of his own party, I do not know that we can do better than to take him. Though decided in his course in opposition to the policy of the administration, he has not been vindictive or bitter. He obeyed instructions too, & by his vote saved the tariff-bill of 1846,⁹ which but few others of the leading men of his party would have done, and for that act he deserves credit.

With the kind salutations of *Mrs. Polk* and myself to *Mrs Brown*¹⁰

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked “*strictly confidential.*”

1. Polk refers to Aaron V. Brown’s gubernatorial defeat by Whig Neill S. Brown.

2. Reference is to a race for the U.S. House seat from Tennessee’s sixth district, in which James H. Thomas defeated Boling (or Bolling) Gordon by 1,119 votes. Gordon (1800–1890) was a Hickman County planter who served in the Tennessee House, 1829–35, and the Tennessee Senate, 1835–37 and 1843–45. In 1836 and 1840, he served as a presidential elector for Martin Van Buren.

3. Johnson (1808–75), a Democrat who began his career as a tailor in Greeneville, Greene County, in East Tennessee, was often critical of Polk’s patronage decisions. He served in the U.S. House, 1843–53; as Tennessee governor, 1853–57; in the U.S. Senate, 1857–62; as military governor of Tennessee, 1862–65; and as vice president, March–April 1865. After Abraham Lincoln’s death, he served as president, April 1865–March 1869. In 1868 the U.S. House impeached him but the Senate voted for acquittal. He again served in the U.S. Senate, March–July 1875.

4. Polk, who served as Tennessee governor, 1839–41, lost his 1841 reelection race to Whig James C. “Lean Jimmy” Jones. Two years later, attempting to regain the governorship, Polk lost again to Jones.

5. Frederick P. Stanton.

6. The twelfth amendment to the Constitution stipulates that, should no presidential candidate win a majority of votes in the electoral college, the U.S. House will choose the winner, with each state's delegation casting one vote.

7. Henry Clay and Zachary Taylor. Taylor became a national hero for his military service during the Mexican War and early in that conflict was rumored to harbor presidential aspirations. Not until 1848, however, did he reveal his political views and affiliate himself with the Whig party. Many promoted him as a nonpartisan candidate for the presidency.

8. Tennessee-born lawyer and Whig Spencer Jarnagin (1792 or 1794–1851) began a law practice in Knoxville in 1817 and served in the state senate, 1833–35, before moving to Athens, Tenn. In 1840 he was a Whig presidential elector. Jarnagin served in the U.S. Senate, 1843–47. In his later years, after losing bids for reelection to the Senate and for a seat on the state supreme court, he moved to Memphis and resumed his legal practice.

9. Polk refers to the Walker Tariff bill, on which Senator Jarnagin abstained, creating a tie and enabling Vice President George M. Dallas to cast the deciding vote in the bill's favor.

10. Cynthia Holland Pillow (1810–92), Gideon J. Pillow's sister, was born in Giles County, Tenn., and educated at the Nashville Female Academy. She married John W. Saunders in 1832. He died ten years later and she married Aaron V. Brown on September 16, 1845.

FROM JOSEPH HALL¹

Sir

Navy agent office Boston August 23 1847

The U. Sloop of War Albany arrived at this Port Friday evening last. Saturday Morning our mutual friend Purser Harris² called on me deeply afflicted, without speaking. He handed me a letter from you informing him that Mrs Harris was no more.³ On his way from the Tremont House to my office he called at the Post office and found the letter above alluded to. The dispensation, is a severe one to him. I sympathise fully with him, having in early life experienced a simular affliction.⁴

Afflictions of this kind almost unman us, and were it not, that Divine Providence has so ordered, that operates to relieve us under such dispensations, we should be unfitted for society, or business in this world. Mr Harris is anxious to leave for the west and I shall cheerfully aid him in any way I can to hasten his departure; and relieve his feelings. But alas! no earthly power can restore his friend, or heal the wound. Pardon me my respected sir, for the liberty I take in addressing this line to you. I do so to inform you that Mr Harris has recd your letter, and will soon be on his to Washington. His health is good, and he is looking quite well.

JOSEPH HALL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received August 26, 1847.

1. Hall (1793–1859)—not to be confused with Philadelphia Democrat Joseph Hall—was born in Methuen, Mass., and moved in 1809 to Camden, in Maine, where he became a merchant. An officer in the Massachusetts militia during the War of 1812, he became deputy sheriff of Lincoln County, Maine, in 1821 and sheriff of Waldo County in 1827. He served as postmaster at Camden, 1830–33 and 1837–38; as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1833–37; as measurer in the Boston Customs House, 1838–46; and as navy agent there, 1846–49. In early 1847 he became vice consul of Sweden and Norway for Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire.

2. Jeremiah George Harris.

3. Polk to Jeremiah George Harris, August 13, 1847. Reference is to Lucinda McGavock Harris.

4. Hall refers to the death of his first wife, Mary Howe Hall (1791?–1825), a native of Shrewsbury, Mass., whom he had married in 1816.

FROM JOSEPH L. WILLIAMS¹

Dear Sir:

Knoxville [Tenn.]² August 23d 1847

I hope you may find time amid the constant throng of weighty affairs that presses on your attention, to consider a subject that I named in a letter to you, some time in the latter part of last winter.³ I allude to the want of protection on the frontier between the Nueces & the Rio Grande.⁴ Until annexation & the consequent reliance of Texas, rather upon the Union than upon her own resources & vigilance, she had that country, by policy, as against the Mexicans, &, by force of arms, as against the Apache & Comanche Indians.⁵ When the Texan Rangers⁶ were sent off to Monterey,⁷ the Indians came down & pretty much resumed possession there. I understand that the President authorized Gov. Henderson⁸ to organize a new corps of Rangers & that the Gov. delegated the trust to Genl Lamar.⁹ How this is, I know not; but, my present object is, to apprise the President that his wishes in this subject have not been fulfilled & that property on that position has consequently suffered much from the depredations of the Indians. An efficient corps of 90 or 100 Rangers with rifles & Colts pistols, might remove the difficulty, perhaps, notwithstanding the thread-bare falsehood, that Texas never exercised jurisdiction & never reduced her claim to any sort of possession there; surveys by her officers were made there eight & nine years since; & conformably to her laws, & to one of those surveys, a Company, in which I myself am interested, recently obtained from the State of Texas, a Patent, on a Section of land, embracing & almost covered by, what is there familiarly called, the Big Salt Lake¹⁰—where, in a perfect & clean condition, &, in any conceivable quantity, the chrystalised article is formed by solar evaporation. It is there formed, perhaps the

very best article in the market of the world. And yet, in consequence of the Indians taking possession & depredating thereabouts, we are unable to have or enjoy the use of this property. Under the blockade,¹¹ salt became a much more desirable article, in adjacent parts of Mexico; & consequently, the Indians with mongrel Mexicans in great numbers, thronged this salt formation, &, plundering millions of bushels belonging to our Company, packed it off on caravans, into Mexico & sold it at high prices. As citizens of the U. States, we claim the protection of the U. States for this our property, especially as that protection, by the means above suggested, is so practicable & easy. This property is of the greatest value, not merely to our Company, but, to many of the markets of the U. States as to the use & consumption of the article. Public policy & private rights, unite, in invoking the government to the protection now asked &, so easily attainable.

You will be surprised, as every body here has been surprised, at the result of the Tenee. elections. This result is to be deplored, especially in its tendency to cripple our government in its foreign policy, embolden the Robbers in Mexico & protract the war. Leading men of our state, exult in the supposed personal mortification of the President, without reflecting, or, if reflecting, not caring, that that exultation is heard by piratical Mexico in the spirit of sympathy & alliance. Had simple patriotism united our councils & our efforts, to sustain the government in its duty, Mexico, ere this, might have been effectually humbled & our treasury might now, perhaps, under new commercial regulations, be enjoying the benefits, of regular trade with that nation. If the designs of the Yankees of the Opposition, could have been well understood here, the result might have been different in Tenee.

JOSEPH L. WILLIAMS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received August 31, 1847; “The tone on the Mexican War, is patriotic. *Mr Williams* is a leading Whig.”

1. Tennessee-born lawyer Williams (1807 or 1810–1865), an alumnus of the U.S. Military Academy, served as a Whig in the U.S House, 1837–43. After failing to win renomination in 1842, he moved his law practice from Knoxville to Washington City. In 1861 Pres. Abraham Lincoln named him a judge on the U.S. District Court for Dakota Territory, a post he held until his death.

2. State identified from content analysis.

3. Letter not found.

4. Williams refers to the transfer of responsibility for protecting Anglo residents, after Texas’s 1845 annexation to the United States, from the government of the former Texas republic to that of the United States. More specifically, he refers to the transfer, during the Mexican War, of the Texas Rangers from the

Rio Grande–Nueces River area—long disputed between Texas and Mexico—to the war theater in and around Monterrey.

5. Williams refers to conflicts between the Republic of Texas and the Apache and Comanche native peoples, complex conflicts that, during the Republic's decade of existence (1836–45), often resulted in deaths among all three parties and occasionally were addressed by diplomacy. When Texas entered the United States, the U.S. government assumed the responsibilities in those conflicts formerly borne by the Texas republic's government. The Apache, a decentralized group of peoples, had lived since Europeans' arrival chiefly in what is now the southwestern United States and northwestern Mexico. Intermittent warfare lasted for centuries between Apaches and the various white regimes. The Comanche, or Nermernuh, previously part of the Shoshone, were a nomadic people who lived, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in and around the southern Great Plains. Horses and raiding being important elements of their culture and economy, Comanches launched attacks, over the centuries, on Spaniards, Mexicans, Texans, and Americans, as well as other native peoples. Their language often was used in trade among the various peoples of the region.

6. The Texas Rangers originated as a handful of frontiersmen, assembled in 1823 as an informal militia under the auspices of impresario Stephen Austin, to protect Anglo colonists in the Mexican province of Texas from Indian attacks. In November 1835, prior to the major battles of the Texas war for independence (1835–36), its ranks were increased and accorded formal status as the Texas Rangers. During that war and the life of the Texas republic, the Rangers fought against both Indians and Mexican troops. Mirabeau B. Lamar, during his presidency (1838–41), successfully beseeched Texas's Congress again to increase the Rangers' numbers and, beginning in 1839, deployed them in a series of attacks on Indians. Particularly targeted were the Comanche and Cherokee who had assisted the Córdoba Rebellion, a short-lived insurgency against the republic's government centered around Nacogdoches, Texas. During the Mexican War, Texas Rangers fought in numerous engagements and, due to their knowledge of local topography, often functioned as scouts for troops under Gens. Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott. Although the Rangers intermittently played significant roles in Texas history in the years following the Mexican War and into the early twentieth century, by the early 1930s their numbers and importance had dwindled. In 1935 the name Texas Rangers was revived by the Texas Department of Public Safety for use by a statewide law-enforcement agency.

7. The Battle of Monterrey, September 21–24, 1846, ended in victory by Zachary Taylor's U.S. forces over Pedro de Ampudia y Grimarest's Mexicans. Taylor accepted a capitulation by Ampudia, under which the Mexicans left the city but kept their weapons and both sides agreed to an eight-week armistice; on October 13 Polk, through William L. Marcy, ordered the end of the armistice.

8. Soldier, lawyer, and politician James Pinckney Henderson (1808–58) served the Republic of Texas as attorney general, as secretary of state, and in several diplomatic posts. After Texas became a U.S. state, he served as its first

governor, 1846–47, and as major general of its volunteer regiments during the Mexican War. He served in the U.S. Senate as a Democrat, 1857–58.

9. Georgia native Mirabeau B. Lamar (1798–1859) founded the Columbus (Ga.) *Enquirer* in 1828 and served in the state senate, 1829–30. After losing elections for Congress in 1832 and 1834, he moved to Texas, where he joined the Texas war for independence as a soldier, politician, and pro-independence poet. Elected the Texas republic's first vice president in 1836, he succeeded Sam Houston as its second president in 1838. Under his presidency, Texas won diplomatic recognition by key European powers. Believing that the republic should expand its domain to the Pacific coast, he opposed U.S. annexation. After retiring from politics in 1841, Lamar served in the U.S. Army in 1846 and, in 1847, won a seat in the Texas state legislature. By the end of August 1847, he was commanding a company of Texas Rangers stationed at Laredo; he was part of the Texas mounted regiment received into the army to defend the frontier in September and October.

10. Williams likely refers to Big Salt Lake, near today's Tularosa, N.M., an area claimed formerly by Mexico and until 1850 by the state of Texas.

11. In May 1846 Polk ordered the navy's Home and Pacific Squadrons to blockade all Mexican ports.

TO AARON V. BROWN

My Dear Sir:

Washington City August 24th 1847

I have been deliberating for several days past, about the propriety of calling an additional volunteer force to the field. I have no late *official* intelligence from *Genl. Scott's* army. My information from Mexico, received through other channels, induces the belief that peace may not be near at hand, and that we will be compelled to continue the war. To do this, with the more efficiency, additional forces will be required. I have postponed making the call for several days, in the hope that I might receive further intelligence. If I receive none in the course of two or three days, or if when received it should manifest a continued indisposition on the part of Mexico to treat for peace, I will feel it to be my duty to make a call for five additional Regiments of Infantry. I will probably call for one Regiment from *Indiana*; Two Regiments from *Tennessee*; and Two Regiments from *Kentucky*.¹ I write this hasty unofficial note to apprise you that I may make the call. If I do so, the requisitions, will of course be made upon the Governors of the States from which the troops are to come, by the Secretary of War.²

I wrote you a long private letter last night.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked "*Private & unofficial.*"

1. Polk ordered the raising of these five regiments, totaling 4,500 troops, on the day he wrote this letter.

2. William L. Marcy.

FROM CHARLES F. FLETCHER¹

Mr President

Kalorama [D.C.] Aug. 24 1847

I send here with for your perusal my manuscript pamphlet on slavery with an appendix showing the right of the United States to California by the old British charters.² I have often wondered that our ambassadors have not hunted up these old charters & presented our claim to the boundaries described in these old deeds.

Mr Calhoun³ in his public speeches in Congress recommended the taking possession of a line of boundary running through the Mexican territory & fortify & hold it but he gave no sufficient reason for so doing.⁴ Had he come out boldly & claimed the territory as our own by ancient laws, had he produced the charter of Carolina⁵ and demanded the possession of her south western boundary the people of America & of Europe would see, that he was advocating his own state's rights demanding the same rights for his fellow Citizens to go westward to the Pacific Ocean which the Northern states had already acquired through toil & fighting & negotiation. The treaty of 1832 with Mexico⁶ might be pleaded in bar to this occupation, but the government by its war making power had in its wisdom seen proper to dissolve & annul that treaty.⁷ Then Carolina was disencumbered by treaties & could freely demand its own.

Had the colonies remained under the sovereignty of Great Britain it is probable in this that California would have been annexed to Carolina. Before the old French war⁸ the agitation was begun, for proof of which I beg leave to call the attention of yr Excellency to a small volume now in the library of congress a petition of Daniel Coxe about a hundred years ago for the restoration of Carolina to the crown of G.B. & to the rightful proprietors.⁹ In the Catalogue of the library it will be found under the head of geography of America. The river therein called the St. Mathes is now called the St. John's.¹⁰

At the close of the old French war the British acquired the acknowledged right to the whole of the Atlantic front of North America & probably for reasons of state they did not then choose to press the claim of Carolina to California but because it was not then pressed it does not follow that it was relinquished. The consent of Carolina was necessary before her boundaries could be circumscribed and if circumscribed the right of Carolina to reclaim her ancient limits either by purchase or otherwise, always remains.

The probable course of the British government were it now ruler of America would be to take possession of the ancient boundaries of Carolina as the line of right and hold as hostage sufficient cities of Mexico to compel her to sue for peace, quartering such army upon them as would be necessary to enforce obedience.

The course pursued by the present American government will probably command the admiration of future ages when the passions of party have no longer an object in defaming it.

The only thing that I can see cause for regret during the whole war was the abandonment of Chihuahua by Col. Doniphon.¹¹ He & his men performed a great feat & made their name glorious by marching there & conquering the place, but to my mind, he undid the good which he had done by coming away. The probable object of sending the Armies of the United States into Mexico is to take & to hold certain portions of her Country until she is willing to make peace. Now if all the armies retreat after they have captured & do not stay to hold, it is self evident that all the work must be done over again or relinquished altogether & let the enemy have his own way.

May I ask that my manuscript pamphlet may be sent to the post office (after it has been perused) with the superscription to Mr Greene¹² out side. I intended it for publication in the city of Boston. I wish that a copy of it might be sent to every town in the Union. Perhaps it may have an influence to cause the agitation of the slavery question, to be suspended & the rightful boundaries of our country proclaimed & acknowledged.

CHAS FLETCHER

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Fletcher (c. 1796–1862), a native of Massachusetts and former resident of New York and Alexandria, D.C., moved to Kalorama, D.C., after his stepson purchased that estate in 1846. A farmer, throughout his remaining years he was involved in various land development projects in and around Washington City, as well as railroad enterprises, both local and national.

2. Enclosure not found. “British charters” and the mention later in this letter of “ancient laws” apparently refer to the charters of British colonies in what became the United States before the declaration of American independence in 1776. Some such charters granted colonies land extending west to the Pacific Ocean. These were founded on various British claims to and in California. Such claims tended to be based on the actions of explorers rather than on the establishment of permanent settlements. The earliest claim reached back to 1579, when explorer Sir Francis Drake anchored off the California coast, came ashore briefly, and claimed the area for England, calling it Nova Albion, Latin for “New White,” the latter word a reference to England’s White Cliffs of Dover. While the specific location of Drake’s visit remains unconfirmed, speculation has long

focused on various coastal points in Marin County, north of San Francisco—including Drake's Bay.

3. South Carolina politician, lawyer, and planter John C. Calhoun (1782–1850) served in the U.S. House, 1811–17; as secretary of war, 1817–25; as vice president, 1825–32; in the U.S. Senate, 1832–43 and 1845–50; and as U.S. secretary of state, 1844–45. First a Democratic Republican and later a Democrat, he remained a consistent advocate for causes associated with Southern planters. His positions shifted, however, between unionism and Southern sectionalism.

4. Calhoun, in a speech before the Senate on February 9, 1847, during debate on the Three Million Dollar Bill, recommended the holding of a defensive line in Mexico that would become the border between the United States and Mexico after the war. He opposed advancing farther into Mexico.

5. A 1663 colonial charter from England's King Charles II decreed that the province of Carolina's boundary extended west to the Pacific Ocean. A 1665 revision to that charter also extended the province's latitudinal borders, placing its northern edge at 36° (in today's state of Virginia) and its southern edge at 29° (in today's Florida). The revision reaffirmed that Carolina stretched westward within those boundaries to the Pacific coast—and thus included land that, in 1847 (and today), belonged to Mexico.

6. The Mexico-U.S. treaty of 1832 reconfirmed boundary lines established between the United States and Spain in the Adams-Onís Treaty. The newly established Republic of Mexico agreed to the same U.S. boundary that its former ruler had accepted in 1819.

7. Polk signed the declaration of war against Mexico on May 13, 1846. "An Act providing for the Prosecution of the existing War between the United States and the Republic of Mexico." *SL*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 16.

8. The French and Indian War, the American theater of the Seven Years' War, was fought between the French and the British—with Indian nations joining each side—from 1754 to 1760. Under the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Seven Years' War in 1763, the United Kingdom acquired Spanish Florida and all French land on the North American continent east of the Mississippi River.

9. Daniel Coxe (c. 1640–1730) was an English physician, explorer, and holder of vast tracts of land in North America—including parts of Florida, the Carolinas, and the Mississippi Valley. In 1722, compiling Coxe's exploration journals into a single volume, his son, also named Daniel, published *A description of the English province of Carolana, by the Spaniards call'd Florida, and by the French La Louisiane: as also of the great and famous river Meschacebe or Missisipi, the five vast navigable lakes of fresh water, and the parts adjacent: together with an account of the commodities of the growth and production of the said province: and a preface containing some considerations on the consequences of the French making settlements there*. In addition to the first edition, the Library of Congress owns reprints from 1727, 1741, and 1840.

10. The St. Johns River is the longest river in Florida. In 1565 Spanish soldiers under the command of Pedro Menéndez de Avilés captured and killed the occupants of Fort Caroline, the first French settlement in what is now the United States. Fort Caroline had sat at a now-unknown site somewhere in the

area occupied by today's city of Jacksonville. In honor of the saint whose feast day came the day after their triumph, the victorious Spanish soldiers named the river that flowed by the settlement the Rio de San Mateo: the St. Matthew's River, or, as rendered here by Fletcher, the "St. Mathes." From San Juan del Puerto—the name of a mission established in 1587 by Spanish Franciscan monks on an island at the river's mouth—the river subsequently became known as the Rio de San Juan: the St. Johns River.

11. A Kentucky native, lawyer Alexander W. Doniphan (1808–87) sat as a Whig in the Missouri House, 1836–37, 1840–41, and 1854–55. By 1838 he had risen to the rank of brigadier general in the Missouri militia. In 1846 he joined the army as colonel of the First Missouri Mounted Regiment, which participated in numerous key actions in the Mexican War's western theater. His regiment, on February 28, 1847, defeated Mexicans led by Gen. Ángel Trías Álvarez in the Battle of Sacramento, in the mountains of the Mexican state of Chihuahua. The Americans entered the city of Chihuahua on March 1–2 but, under orders from Gen. John E. Wool, left it on April 25–28.

12. Fletcher probably refers to Charles G. Greene (1804–86), editor of the *Boston Post* since that Democratic newspaper's founding in 1831. During the decade before he started the *Post*, this New Hampshire native and brother of Nathaniel Greene had held editing, publishing, and other positions at the *Boston Statesman*, the Taunton (Mass.) *Free Press*, the *Boston Spectator* (a literary journal), the Philadelphia *National Palladium*, and the Washington *United States' Telegraph*. He edited the *Post* until he sold it in 1875.

FROM HENRY HORN¹

My Dear Sir

Philadelphia 25th August 1847

Having for the last twelve months remained a silent observer of the political events which have been transpiring at Washington, I should have continued so still, but for the recent announcement in the public papers of a most extraordinary and highly objectionable appointment which has been made by the secretary of State.² I speak now in reference to the appointment of a certain Harry Connelly³ of this City as a special messenger to carry despatches to England.

The appointment of special messengers to foreign places between which and our own Country the medium of intercourse is so direct, speedy and certain, as it is between England and the United States has been regarded by many as the creation of temporary sinecures to reward some favourite partizans of the administration who could not at the time be otherwise provided for. The measure however when practiced by their opponents has always been condemned by the Democrats as a waste of public money and an abuse of power by the State department. In the present instance even the poor excuse of rewarding a political partizan cannot be urged in extenuation of the act, since Mr

Connelly has long been and still is notorious for his constant and clamorous opposition to Democratic men and measures. He has the credit of having rendered the Whig party most essential service by betting and other such means against you and the whole democratic party during the Presidential election of 1844. If such men be selected as objects of the peculiar favour and friendship of your administration, it will by no means be surprising to find that sassiness and indifference to an alarming extent will pervade the ranks of the Democratic party at our approaching elections. I do not mean to insinuate that the only incentive to action among the democratic party is the love of office. On the contrary while it must be admitted that there are thousands of applicants for public places yet there are millions of good democrats who neither seek nor desire them. This latter class are nevertheless not indifferent as to the proper selection of their public functionaries. They are disappointed and mortified whenever the public patronage is bestowed upon incompetent or unworthy members of their *own* party but when it is extended to some of the worst men in the ranks of their opponents, they become justly indignant and the least evil that can be expected to result from such a state of things is sassiness and indifference on the part of those whose previous exertions have carried the party triumphantly through its struggles.

I am really at a loss to conceive what the secretary of state can mean by such a movement as this, unless it be to reward Mr Connelly for the zealous and effective exertions he made to defeat my confirmation among the whig senators when it was pending before the Senate. I received information at the time that he had made large bets on my rejection and to insure his winning the money he posted⁴ directly to Washington where he remained for some time in constant intercourse with his boon companion the Hon. J M Clayton⁵ and partook also of the civilities of the Hon. James Buchanan.

I refer to this matter not with a view to vent any splenetic feelings which I may be supposed to entertain upon the subject. It is true I have been the victim of a base and unprincipled Clique but with an approving conscience and the respect of my fellow Citizens around me, I despise their malice. And the only apprehension I now entertain is for the safety and success of our party, whose principles I shall ever revere and cherish, while I shall feel bound to repudiate all connection with men who have come in among us with the sole view of promoting their own sinister ends, and who while professing allegiance to our party would utterly prostrate and destroy it that they might rise to eminence upon its ruins. I have referred to the case of Mr Connelly mainly with a view to sustain the allegation I have so often made to you of the hostility

of the Secretary of State to my confirmation by the Senate, a hostility which you could not believe to exist on account of the professions he always made to you of a contrary character.⁶ In the ingenuousness of your own heart, you could not suspect duplicity in one you had invested with a high place in your confidence and friendship.

I might easily refer to other cases strongly corroborative of the views I have expressed upon on this subject. But I shall only trouble you with the general remark that some of my most violent and malicious enemies who spent months at Washington to defeat my confirmation by the vilest slanders and detractions and thus openly contemned and frustrated your own anxiously expressed wishes in regard to it, have been provided for by lucrative appointments both here and at Washington.⁷ These facts speak in a language, not to be misunderstood. The efforts which have been thus made to goad and mortify me and my friends I assure you can be productive of no good.

The secretary of state has been singularly unfortunate in the appointments which have been made through his agency. This together with the recent movement of his confidential friends in favour of Gen Taylor for the next Presidency I assure you are by no means calculated to unite and harmonise the Democracy of our state at the approaching election. I hope however that in defiance of the faction that is striving to disorganise us we may yet sustain the political honor and integrity of our state.

HENRY HORN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Marked “(Private)” on the cover and “*Private & Confidential*” at the top of the letter. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received August 26, 1847; “Private.”

1. A Philadelphia lawyer and Democrat, Horn (1786–1862) served in the U.S. House, 1831–33. Polk nominated him as customs collector at Philadelphia in 1845 and 1846, but the Senate, swayed by opposition led by Simon Cameron, rejected the nominations. Horn nonetheless served in that post from May 1845 to August 1846, before the Senate confirmed an alternate nominee.

2. James Buchanan.

3. Connelly (c. 1806–1863), a Whig, owned and operated a popular tavern at Seventh and Chestnut Streets, in Philadelphia. His clientele included both Whig and Democratic politicians; Buchanan was a friend and customer. No record of an appointment of Connelly to any diplomatic post during the Polk administration has been located. In January 1849, however, a Connelly admirer in Pennsylvania, in a letter to Kentucky’s Whig governor John J. Crittenden, proposed his appointment, for the incoming administration of President-elect Zachary Taylor, as U.S. consul at Liverpool, England. That post, instead, eventually went to Crittenden’s son Thomas L. Crittenden.

4. In a now-rare usage, "post" meant "travel" or "hurry."

5. A Dover, Del., Whig and lawyer, John M. Clayton (1796–1856) entered Delaware's House in 1824 and served as its secretary of state, 1826–28. Elected first as an Anti-Jacksonian and later as a Whig, he served in the U.S. Senate, 1829–36, 1845–49, and 1853–56. He was chief justice of Delaware's highest court, 1837–39, and U.S. secretary of state under Zachary Taylor, 1849–50.

6. Horn asserted that Buchanan had fought against his confirmation in Horn to Polk, December 25, 1846. According to Polk's diary entry of February 11, 1846, the secretary of state early on had opposed but then had acceded to Horn's nomination.

7. Opening quotation mark missing.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON¹

Dear Sir, New York Augt 26h [1847]² (Thursday Morning)

I reached here on Tuesday evening & find a most formidable & I may add infamous combination as I am indeed to believe among the principal steam boat owners in the sound to force the department to pay prices beyond the maximums allowed by law.

Two years ago we let the contracts—

one by Stonington to Boston second class	at \$100 p mile.
one by New Haven & springfield second class	at 100 "
one by Bridgeport & over the Housatonic Rail Road to Stockbridge Third class	at 50 "
and during the winter months when the albany mail goes over it	at 100 "

Service has been regularly performed at the above rates for daily services, where the Sunday trip is not performed one seventh off & on the part of the routes where steam boats are used instead of Rail Roads 12 1/2 p Cent less. These routes have been paid accordingly for two years, some of them however refusing to execute contracts. A few days past Vanderbilt,³ one of the wealthiest of the steam boat owners refused to take the mails longer unless paid about 33 1/3 p Cent advance between this place & New Haven. The Post Master⁴ then sent the mails to the Bridgeport line and they refused peremptorily take them (Schulyer contractor another wealthy steam boat owner).⁵ The Post Master then sent the mails by the Coachline around the bay to Bridgeport & New Haven. We to day have learnt, that the Rail Road from New Haven by Hartford & Springfield to Boston, which is interested in the steam boat line between New York & New Haven have thrown off the mails, for what reason we have not learned, and we expect before the week closes the line by Stonington will do the same thing. This line is said to be under the control of the New Jersey companies.

I have determined to send the letter mails by Express & the News paper mails by Coaches & have sent for some of our most efficient Coach Contractors, who will be probably in tomorrow & I shall despatch Mr. Dundass⁶ to New Haven tomorrow, to secure the proper service between New Haven & Hartford & other intermediate points and I expect in a few days the [Navell]⁷ Newspapers in this city to be out in full blast agt. me.

The New Jersey companies I suspect are the bottom of the whole movement and perhaps Mr. Moncure Robertson⁸ late the Pres. of the Richmond line, & is now in the city & the two Presidents of the New Jersey companies⁹ are expected here tomorrow.

And I shall not be surprised at any thing they may do. Such an assemblage at such a time & such movements going on indicate a determination, to force me beyond the fair & legitimate construction of the law but nothing will induce me to yield an inch not even if the clamor should be so great as to make it necessary for me to abandon my position. They have timed their movements well, as they believe that ice & snows & bad roads will soon make the Coach service so bad that public opinion will drive me to them in a short time & force me to yield to their demands.

It is very uncertain when I shall be able to leave here but the first moment after the service is adjusted I shall hasten to Washington. Most of the leading men are absent.

I beg pardon for troubling you with these details but I thought them necessary by way of explanation of any articles you may see in the papers, some of which are said to be under the control of these corporations.

C. JOHNSON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received August 27, 1847.

1. Johnson (1793–1866) was a lawyer, judge, banker, and trusted political advisor to Polk. A Democrat and a Tennessee native, he served in the U.S. House, 1829–37 and 1839–45, and, under Polk, as postmaster general, 1845–49. In 1847 he introduced the first U.S. postage stamp.

2. Year identified through content analysis.

3. New York financier and transportation magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt (1794–1877), though born poor, as a young man began acquiring various boats and soon operated a lucrative ferry business. Eventually he ran a steamship line that, from New York City, called on far-flung ports from the United Kingdom to California. In the 1850s he began investing in railroads and in 1867 he consolidated his various lines into one system. His New York Railroad, stretching westward to Chicago, eventually included more than 4,500 miles of track.

4. Robert H. Morris (1802–55) was postmaster at New York City, 1845–49. A lawyer and a Democrat, he had served in the New York House, 1833–34; as

New York City recorder, 1838–41; and as mayor, 1841–44. He was elected to the state constitutional convention in 1846.

5. Reference is likely to one of two entrepreneur brothers, Robert and George L. Schuyler, both active during that era in the New York City–New Haven transportation corridor. Robert (1798–1855), often known as America’s first “railroad king,” was the more prominent. Though his career ended in a stock-fraud scandal in 1853–54, over the years he prospered through his involvement in at least five different rail lines. President of the New York & New Haven Railroad, he seems more likely the subject of this letter’s reference. George (1811–90), who became prominent later in life as a yachtsman, during his early years was active in steamship as well as rail lines operating between New York City and New Haven. (The Housatonic Rail Road, mentioned above, built in 1836–42, stretched from Bridgeport, Conn., to Sheffield, Mass.)

6. William H. Dundas (c. 1793–1861), born in Alexandria, D.C., studied law and became a merchant in Alexandria and Baltimore. By 1830 he had become a clerk in the Post Office Department; in 1846 he became chief clerk, a post he held until his promotion to second assistant postmaster general in 1852. As chief clerk he was responsible for the inspection of mail service.

7. Word uncertain.

8. Johnson miswrote the name of Moncure Robinson (1802–91), a prominent civil engineer born in Richmond, Va., and living in Philadelphia. He contributed to canals but was best known for his railroad work. Among those he surveyed in the 1820s and 1830s were the Danville and Pottsville Railroad; the Allegheny Portage Railroad; the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad; and the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad. He attained particular fame for his work on the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad. In 1840 Czar Nicholas I asked him to design Russia’s system of railroads, but he declined. In 1842, under a federal appointment, he surveyed New York Harbor to determine the location for a dry dock. He retired in 1847.

9. Johnson probably refers to Robert L. Stevens, president of the Camden and Amboy Railroad and Transportation Company, and John S. Darcy, president of the New Jersey Railroad and Transportation Company. Stevens (1787–1856), a renowned engineer from Hoboken, N.J., made numerous innovations to steamships, including, in 1818, the burning of anthracite coal. He invented a cannon-fired bomb for the navy during the War of 1812 and, commissioned by the federal government, began (but never finished) constructing the world’s first ironclad steamer in 1842. In 1816 he initiated the first steam ferry service between New York City and New Jersey. In 1830 he became president of the Camden and Amboy, New Jersey’s first railroad company, which was chartered that year and began operating in 1832. He then turned his talents to improving train travel, inventing—among other things—the T rail, his version of which became widely used and known as the “Stevens rail.” Darcy (1788–1863), a physician and Democrat born in Hanover, N.J., moved to Newark in 1832 to treat victims of cholera. He served in the state legislature, 1819, and as U.S. marshal for New Jersey, 1835–41. He was president of the New Jersey Railroad from 1832, when it was chartered, until his death (though he was absent in California, for his health, in 1849). Service on that line began in 1834. Originally founded to

connect Jersey City, Newark, and New Brunswick, it was extended in the late 1830s; in 1839 it stretched from Philadelphia to New York City.

FROM WILLIAM H. STILES¹

Dear Sir

Vienna August 26th 1847

In glancing over one of the late American papers, my attention was arrested by the following paragraph. "It is now certain, that the Pope² has intimated his desire, though not formally, to open diplomatic relations with this country. The channel through which the overture has been made, is such that it can not be disregarded. The cabinet is fully alive to the mutual advantages, that would result from the establishment of diplomatic intercourse between them, and the President in his next annual message to Congress will recommend the appointment of a *chargé d'Affaires* to reside alternately near the courts of Rome and Tuscany."³ Convinced of the truth of the former part of the statement, so far as concerns the desire there attributed to the Pope, for the establishment of diplomatic relations between the States of the Church, and the United States,⁴ and presuming the remainder, as regards his having intimated that desire, and the proposed action of our government upon the subject, to be consequently, at least probable, I venture Mr President upon the expression of a single suggestion. It is with great reluctance however that I make the attempt, for fear that the motives by which I am alone actuated, may possibly be misinterpreted or at all events, not properly understood. 'Tis true Sir, that when I received from you the appointment to the station which I now hold, it was under the expectation expressed I believe by yourself and certainly felt by me, that the mission to this court, just then so hastily and without due reflection reduced, would ere this have been restored.⁵ 'Tis true that in this I have been disappointed not from a want of merit in the application, but because the attention of Congress, has been upon subjects of higher importance, intensely occupied. And it is likewise equally true, that I am not indifferent to the desire of seeing my country represented abroad by a rank proportioned to her importance, but farther than these can be considered so, I deny the participation of any selfish feeling in the suggestion which I make.

The suggestion is, that the grade of representation to be recommended to Congress for our adoption with the Pontifical states, be at least that of a *minister plenipotentiary*, and if from motives of economy a separate full mission to that court be deemed at this time unadvisable, let the mission to Austria be included with it, and let one agent of proper and sufficient rank represent our government, as it really

should be represented, at both Courts. The importance of *rank*, in a foreign representation of our country is a matter but illy appreciated by the mass of our legislators, and can only be properly learnt and duly felt, by experience. It is undoubtedly true, that whatever grade we may please to confer upon our agents they are all equally and alike the representatives of the country, and should be respected accordingly, as such, but here as in many other things principle and practice are not consistent; & in European Courts & especially the highest of them, the gap, between an Ambassador and a minister plenipotentiary is wide indeed, whilst that between a minister and a Chargé d'Affaires is still more apparent. We should give our diplomatic agents abroad rank even if we are unwilling to give them proportionate salaries, by an opposite course we but blindly oppose our own interest and depreciate our own importance. Were the representative of his country to be sent into a field where *intelligence* was the only standard and where he must stand or fall according to that standard, it would matter but little what might be the grade of his mission; but where it is the field of *rank* which he enters, where he is not known as an *individual* but as an *officer* and where he must take station in every scene in which he mingles, not according to his own intelligence or the position of his country in the scale of nations, but according *only* to that rank which his country has thought proper to bestow on him, it would seem but the dictate of prudence and of wisdom on the part of the nation, not to destroy his means of advancing her interest, or to lessen herself in the eyes of the other powers of the world, by diminishing the rank of her representative. Upon this point, I will not occupy your important time by enlarging. The mere suggestion will suffice, but permit me to say, that all the arguments in favor of a high mission at any court, apply with redoubled force to that now in contemplation with the States of the Church. 1st Because it is the *commencement* of an intercourse, the first *entrance* into diplomatic relations when it is essentially important to make as favorable an impression as possible, an object which would be defeated by sending an agent of inferior grade, since such a step would assuredly be regarded as a poor compliment to them, and at the same time a want of proper respect for ourselves. It was on this very ground you will recollect Mr. President that our own government when it first took its stand among the nations of the earth, that it, sent full mini[s]ters⁶ to many courts, at which we are at the present day, represented but by Chargés d'Affaires viz Portuga[l] Sweden Denmark the Netherlands &c. and the same reaso[n] you will find stated by Genl Washington⁷ in his message in 1791, when communicating to Congress the appointment of a min[is]ter to Portugal instead of a Chargé d'Affaires whom they had

refused to receive viz that “although it might become necessary to yield even elsewhere, it would be a less evil than to *disgust a government* so friendly.”⁸

2nd Another reason for the appointment of a full minister i[n] the first instance to the Pontifical states, is that he may b[e] provided with authority to make or enter into such treaties and compacts as are consequent upon the commencement of diplomatic intercourse between the tw[o] governments and the daily increasing commercial relations between the two countries.

3rd Still another reason why we should have a full ministe[r] at *that*, as well as at *all* other important courts, *is* the rapid advancement which our country is now making towards the very *first* rank in the scale of nations. I am no flatterer Sir, I abhor the breath of a flatterer as I wou[ld] that of a viper, but the fear of such a reproach shall not deter me from uttering the honest feelings of my breast, when I assert it, to be my opinion, that since your entrance into the Presidential chair, our country has risen more rapidly in the estimation of the other powers of the earth, than during any other two years of her existence, without it be at first when like Minerva from the head of Jove⁹ she sprang forth full grown and full armed upon the world. You Sir were the first to declare with an emphasis, who and what we were, what was our present position, and what our future destiny as a Nation. You have the honor of being the author of our second “declaration of independence,”¹⁰ an independance too, not of Great Brittain alone, but of the whole and entire world, and that which at the time of its appearance, was regarded but as idle yankee braggardism is now quietly settled down into solemn and incontrovertible truth. This has been the result of the measures of your administration, the annexation of Texas, settlement of the Oregon question, modification of the Tariff, probable addition of the Californias¹¹ and especially the most remarkable manner in which we have chastized Mexico whilst manifesting towards her all the kindness which actuates a parent in the punnishment of a wayward child. These things have together exalted our country to so enviable a position, that there is scarce a fooreigner who does not long to claim that soil as his own, not an American be his political complexion what it may, who does not assert with more pride and gratification, than ever a similar epithet was used by a son of Rome in her patrenist days, “I am an *American* citizen.”¹²

So much as to the importance of our having at the outset a minister with full powers at this States of the Church. A word as to the alternative alluded to in my suggestion viz that if from motives of economy, a seperate full mission, can not be spared to that court, that in that event,

let the mission to Austria be embraced with it, and let a sufficient and acceptable agent of our government represent us at both Courts.

There are certain reasons why it is peculiarly fit and appropriate that these courts should be united under the same representation. They all territorially adjoin, their ports or marts of commerce lie upon the same inland sea, their principal imports & exports and consequently their interests the same, their language except in the *upper* portions of Austria, the same, their religion the same, whilst their three governments are perhaps more rigidly attached than any others to the great Papal head. Their capitals, are at present, but four days travel apart, and when the rail-roads now in progress,¹³ shall be completed, will be rendered still nearer, an objection which has not been considered by our government as very formidable, since Mr Wheaton¹⁴ who has just returned to the United States, represented as I believe, at one time, both at Prussia and Sweden where the capitals were separated by the Baltic Sea.

As for Tuscany, the reasons for its joint representation with this court are still stronger. In addition to the grounds already stated, that Duchy can not be considered other than a part and parcel of the Austrian empire. The same royal family sits on both thrones.¹⁵ In the event of a failure of male heirs to the Austrian crown, the Grand Duke of Tuscany¹⁶ succeeds to the Imperial throne, and if on the contrary an absence of heirs to the Duke of Tuscany occurs, the Imperial family succeeds to the Duchy. Leopold,¹⁷ the grand father of the present Emperor of Austria,¹⁸ from a Duke of Tuscany ascended the Imperial throne.

Such Mr President are a few hasty and undigested thoughts which have occurred to me on the perusal of the paragraph above quoted, and it only remains to me, to crave your indulgence, for the liberty which I have taken in presenting them to your consideration, to request that you will give to them such weight only as you may deem them *intrinsically* entitled, and in justification of my motives in addressing you on the subject, that you will allow me to add in conclusion, that should you deem the latter suggestion as to a combination of the representations at this court and at Rome worthy of your recommendation, that I am ready upon its adoption, to vacate my situation here in favor of such other individual, as you may consider more competent for the discharge of the important trust.

WILLIAM H STILES

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*Private.*” From John Miller’s¹⁹ AES: received September 4, 1847.

1. Stiles (1808–65), a native of Savannah, Ga., was educated at Yale College and was admitted to the bar in 1831. He afterwards established a law practice

in his native town. He represented a Georgia district as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1843–45. Appointed by Polk, he served as chargé d'affaires to Austria, 1845–49. He then resumed his law practice in Savannah.

2. Pope Pius IX (1792–1878), Giovanni Maria Mastai-Ferretti, reigned from 1846 until his death. In 1870, during his reign, the Papal States—over which popes had ruled since the eighth century—became part of the Kingdom of Italy, established in 1861.

3. This paragraph, which Stiles excerpts and slightly paraphrases, is part of a letter signed “Galviensis” and dated July 13, 1847, at Washington City. It appeared in the New York *Herald*, July 15, 1847, and later was quoted in other newspapers. Polk, in his Third Annual Message to Congress, did recommend “opening diplomatic relations with the Papal States” due to “interesting political events now in progress in these States, as well as a just regard to our commercial interests.”

4. From 1797 to 1870, the United States had ties at the consular level with the Papal States. From 1848 to 1868, it also maintained diplomatic relations with the pope, as head of state for the Papal States, through a chargé d'affaires (but not a minister or ambassador, as Stiles recommends in this letter). See also letter and notes in George C. Sibley et al. to Polk, c. 1848.

5. Stiles’s predecessor, Daniel Jenifer, had held the title of minister to Austria. An appropriations bill signed by Pres. John Tyler on March 3, 1845, reduced the station to a chargé d'affaires. “An Act making appropriations for the civil and diplomatic expenses of the Government for the year ending the thirtieth June, eighteen hundred and forty-six, and for other purposes.” *SL*, 28th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 71.

6. Letter or letters here and below obscured by tape.

7. George Washington (1732–99), a Virginian, served as a delegate to the First and Second Continental Congresses, 1774–75; as commander-in-chief of the Continental Army, 1775–83; and as the first U.S. president, 1789–97.

8. Paraphrase of Washington’s special message to the Senate, February 18, 1791: “But should it be necessary to yield elsewhere also, I shall think it a less evil than to disgust a government so friendly and so interesting to us as that of Portugal.” *CMPP*–1, pp. 89–90. The minister whom Washington appointed was David Humphreys (1752–1818), who had been a colonel and Washington’s aide-de-camp during the Revolutionary War. Elected to the Connecticut legislature in 1786, Humphreys served, among other diplomatic appointments, as minister to Portugal, 1791–97, and to Spain, 1796–1801. He commanded troops in the War of 1812 and wrote both poetry and prose.

9. By tradition, Minerva, ancient Rome’s mythical goddess of the arts, wisdom, and commerce, had sprung from the head of Jove, also known as Jupiter, the god of thunder and the sky and the chief god in Roman mythology.

10. A measure passed by the U.S. House in 1836, when Polk served as Speaker, was often called the “second declaration of independence” by its proponents, but is more widely remembered as the “specie circular.” It stipulated that sales of public lands by the federal government must be transacted in gold or silver, an issue that had become a subject of controversy due to growing sales of land in the West after the Indian Removal Act of 1830. Although the

specie circular was, later in 1836, issued as an executive order by Pres. Andrew Jackson, its enforcement fell to the administration of Jackson's successor, Martin Van Buren.

11. Usage of the plural form "the Californias" reflects that area's contemporary governance by the Republic of Mexico. The place that U.S. citizens call California was part of the area, extending farther east into today's Wyoming, Colorado, and New Mexico, that was called Alta (Upper) California by generations of Spanish and Mexican officials. The name distinguished that Mexican territory (or, from 1836 to 1846, Mexican department) from Baja (Lower) California, a peninsular territory south of and contiguous to it. In contemporary correspondence, particularly among U.S. citizens, the appellations California and Alta California are often used as synonyms. Mexico's title to the Californias, New Mexico, and Texas had attended that republic's victory over Spain in the Mexican War of Independence (1810–21).

12. Stiles modifies a quotation, "I am a Roman citizen," from Cicero *In Verrem* 2.5.147, 2.5.162, and 2.5.168.

13. Austria, at this time, was building a network of railroads intersecting at Vienna. The various Italian states had separate railroad systems.

14. Henry Wheaton (1785–1848) served as a U.S. diplomat in Denmark, 1827–35—not Sweden, as Stiles erroneously asserts—and in Prussia, 1835–46. Among numerous other books, he wrote *Elements of International Law* (1836), which became the dominant work on the topic in North America, the British Isles, and continental Europe and is regarded as the first major work on it in English. Earlier he had practiced law in Providence, R.I., and New York City and served as reporter of decisions for the U.S. Supreme Court, 1816–27. He also held several judicial posts; was a member of the New York legislature, 1824; and served on New York's constitutional convention of 1821.

15. House of Habsburg-Lorraine.

16. Leopold II (1797–1870) reigned as Grand Duke of Tuscany, 1824–59. After approving the Tuscan constitution of 1848, he was widely regarded as a liberal monarch. His rule was briefly interrupted in 1849 by the installation of a provisional government but restored soon thereafter by Austrian troops.

17. Leopold II (1747–92) reigned as Holy Roman Emperor, 1790–92, after twenty-five years as Grand Duke of Tuscany.

18. Ferdinand I (1793–1875) reigned as Emperor of Austria, 1835–48.

19. Miller (1810?–1873), a London bookseller and publisher, served as U.S. dispatch agent there from 1832 until at least 1857.

FROM JANE MARIA ELIZA McMANUS STORMS¹

N. York Aug. 26th [1847]²

Trusting that your Excellency has not forgotten the conversation we had respecting an eminent and patriotic citizen of Cuba, who desired a personal interview, I will now but add that the bearer of this note Don Gaspar Betancourt³ is the person to whom I alluded. I can say nothing of the high and honorable character of Mr Betancourt which your

own penetration will not be prompt to discover, nor of the value of his observation and experience for of that there can be no better judge than your Excellency.

J. M. STORMS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by Gaspar Alonso Betancourt y Cisneros. From Polk's AE: received September 3, 1847.

1. Storms (1807–78), a journalist and activist, was involved in various efforts to bring Texas, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua under U.S. dominion. In 1847 she accompanied Moses Y. Beach on a secret peace mission, proposed by Beach and accepted by Polk, to Mexico. En route they (with Beach's daughter Drusilla B. as their chaperone) stopped in Cuba and met with members of the Havana Club. The Americans arrived in Mexico City in late January 1847 but their peace mission proved unsuccessful. Storms was born in Troy, N.Y., the daughter of U.S. representative William T. McManus. Often using the pen name Cora or Corinne Montgomery, she wrote for publications including Beach's *New York Sun*, the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, the *New York Tribune*, and the *Democratic Review*. She also wrote several books, including *Eagle Pass; or, Life on the Border* (1852). Married in 1825 and divorced in 1831, she remarried in 1849 to William L. Cazneau.

2. Year identified from Polk's AE.

3. Gaspar Alonso Betancourt y Cisneros (1803–66), a Cuban businessman, railroad magnate, writer, and political activist, belonged to the pro–U.S. annexation Havana Club. On June 23, 1848, he, Sen. Jefferson Davis, and two other members of the club met with Polk at the White House to alert him of a planned military insurgency by anti-Spanish activists in Cuba and to suggest that U.S. forces, if only to protect U.S. interests, be stationed at Key West and other Gulf of Mexico ports. Polk was evasive and the visitors left the meeting with no firm idea of the president's thoughts on what they had told him. In July, however, the conspiracy quickly unraveled and its leader, Narciso López, fled Cuba for the United States.

FROM CHARLES B. COTTER¹

Dear Sir,

Coudersport [Penn.], Aug. 27, 1847

Presuming from your own declarations that you have no intention or desire to again come before the public for the high station you now occupy,² many of your friends in Northern Pennsylvania will prefer your present able Secretary of State, Hon. *Jas. Buchanan*, as your successor. Be assured, sir, from the past they would be proud to again cast their suffrages for you, but from your own assertions they dare not look for this pleasure.

Mr. Buchanan is too highly prized by the stern Democracy of the Old Keystone,³ to be permitted by them to let him be passed by by any other man as things now are. The attempt at Harrisburg on the part of

a few zelots to hoist the name of Gen. Taylor,⁴ is regretted. It is *regretted*, because he has not yet seen fit to declare his principles fully, and this, to any good Democrat, cannot but be considered an act too indiscreet to characterize their course. We do not here expect you to name your preference for a successor, but perhaps it might not be deemed imprudent in you to venture a prediction or opinion as to what would be his prospects in the south. This is not designed to evince a disposition to succumb too, or oppose the wishes of the south, but to prudently ascertain the popularity of the man. Pennsylvania has long labored for the promotion of men of other states, but never had the honor of having one of her sons placed in the Presidential Chair.

The information I obtained of a friend who had a personal interview with you, satisfies me that it is not here necessary to observe the formality of apologising to you for this intrusive address.

C. B. COTTER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne’s AE: received September 2, 1847.

1. A lawyer admitted to the bar in 1842, Cotter (1815–73) owned and edited a Coudersport, Penn., Democratic newspaper. The paper underwent several name changes; at the time of its closing in 1850, it was called the *Potter Pioneer*.

2. After becoming the Democratic presidential nominee in 1844, Polk, borrowing a campaign vow long made by Whig presidential candidates, promised that he would not seek a second term in his letter accepting the nomination, Polk to Henry Hubbard et al., June 12, 1844.

3. “Keystone State,” an epithet for Pennsylvania, reputedly refers to the state’s geographically middle placement among the original thirteen colonies that became the United States and to the fact that two of that nation’s founding documents, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, were ratified within its borders.

4. A meeting of Democrats in Pennsylvania’s capital city on June 26, 1847, nominated Zachary Taylor for the presidency and appointed a State Central Committee to promote his candidacy.

FROM FRANCES H. LANPHEAR AND JANE TWEEDY¹

Most Honorable Sir

Walnut Hills Ohio. Aug 28 1847

Do not think us bold or uncivil in addressing you. We have long thought about it, and cannot imagine that so noble a person would deign to be offended at school girls love. We have long watched and waited to see you, but have now entirely abolished the idea, but we have the greatest wish to hear from you. Oh! to receive a letter from the President of the United States, the most amiable, intelligent and

best man the world ever boasted of. We are two girls of fifteen seeking an education at Walnut Hills Seminary² two miles from Cincinnati. We wish to become teachers to propagate christianity and intelligence among the people of the United States. Poverty, blighting, withering, poverty has long kept us back and is now preventing us from securing a finished education, or even a common one and we must content ourselves with the first rudiments, unless some kind hand extends to us means to secure a better one. Can we dare to hope for a letter from you? Sir: if you would but condescend to write to us we would cherish it with our latest breath. We have no assumed names, and all we have written is true. We have thought long about writing to you, and feel confident that you will not disappoint us. Do write soon and let us know if you approve of our efforts and may the smile of Him who resides in the Heaven of Heavens be upon thee, and against thy name in the volume of His will may happiness be written.

FRANCES H LANPHEAR
JANE TWEEDY

P.S. Direct your letter to Walnut Hills Female Seminary Ohio

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received September 2, 1847.

1. Lanphear may have been the girl identified in the census of 1850 as "Francis Y," a then-sixteen-year-old Ohio-born daughter of "Stephen C Lanpher," a Washington Township, Miami County, Ohio, painter. Tweedy (1830–after 1904), born in Cincinnati, married Des Moines County, Iowa, farmer Thomas K. Hurlbut on March 27, 1848.

2. The school that Lanphear and Tweedy attended—in this letter called "Walnut Hills Seminary" and "Walnut Hills Female Seminary"—is not to be confused with Lane Theological Seminary, an institution founded in 1829 to prepare men for the Presbyterian ministry, also in the Cincinnati suburb of Walnut Hills, with money donated by Polk correspondent Andrew Lane and his brothers. The term "seminary," in the nineteenth century, denoted both schools that trained men for the ministry and those that offered women a classical education but whose states had not given them the collegiate charters that permitted the awarding of bachelor's degrees. Further details about the seminary discussed in this letter, apparently one of several institutions for women's higher education established in Walnut Hills during the antebellum period, have not been located.

FROM EDMUND P. GAINES¹

Dear Sir

Hd. Qus. Eastern Division
City of New York August 29th 1847

The return of Paredes to Mexico,² of which important fact I have in the present hour seen a report in the New York papers of this morning, cannot but tend to produce *an immediate change in the political condition of that Republic*—a change so doubtful in its character, and future consequences, as to suggest to me the propriety of addressing to the President of the United States the views which follow:

The prompt union and hearty cooperation of the hitherto scattered elements and adverse heads of every opposing faction, rallying under such a chieftain as this real well tried soldier, Peredes, strengthened as he probably is, either by direct or indirect assurance of patronage from some one or more of the great maritime powers of Europe, might lead to a series of conflicts at every point occupied by our troops, enabling the Enemy at once triumphantly to effect the delicate, and to him all-important *change* in the condition of the War, from the *Defensive* to the *Offensive*. In this event, a few small triumphs—such for example as the defeat of an Escort or Guard of fifteen hundred, or even five or six hundred of our troops, and capture of some two or three hundred of our wagons and teams, might very soon create an enthusiastic reaction against us, tending to jeopard the safety of the whole of our forces within the limits of that Republic, with everything we have hitherto achieved, excepting only what our Gallant Navy would be able to save.

To guard against such an evil, I respectfully solicit orders to obtain and lead to whatever may seem to be the vital point of action in Mexico, a Division or two of Volunteers, to consist of fifteen to twenty five Regiments, (of Rifle, Artillery, Infantry and mounted men in equal numbers, or nearly equal) to be raised and supplied as proposed in my letters of the 25th, 26th, and 30th of March last; and to be landed at whatever sea Port may appear most advisable at the moment of my concentration of the proposed corps upon the Mississippi River in the state of Louisiana.

Should the anticipated evil above suggested as probable, occur (which I pray Heaven avert!) I can cherish no higher aspiration in this world than a successful issue of the effort which I here propose—and be thus instrumental in arresting or checking the progress of such an Evil.

Should I be honored with such a trust, I desire to have General William Gibbs McNiell³ of this City attached to my command, together with those officers named in my letters of March last, above referred to.

EDMUND P. GAINES

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked “*On public Service*” on the cover. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received August 31, 1847.

1. A Virginia native, Gaines (1777–1849) entered the army in 1799. He achieved the rank of brigadier general, brevet major general, during the War of 1812 and commanded the Western Division at the outbreak of the Mexican War.

2. Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga (1797–1849), born in Mexico City, was a conservative politician and general. After leading a rebellion against Pres. José Joaquín Herrera in December 1845, he became president in 1846. Overthrown himself that summer, he went into exile in Paris. After his return in August 1847, Paredes called on Mexicans to keep fighting and opposed the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. He then launched another rebellion, leading to his exile until 1849.

3. William Gibbs McNeill (1800 or 1801–1853), born in North Carolina, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy (appointed from New York) in 1817. He spent most of his army service in the Corps of Topographical Engineers, 1823–37, achieving the brevet rank of major in 1834 and overseeing the construction of numerous railroads. He commanded Rhode Island’s militia as a major general during the Dorr Rebellion in 1842, then served stints as an officer with railroad and canal companies and as chief engineer of the Brooklyn, N.Y., Navy Yard’s dry dock, 1844–45, until Polk removed him due to his role in the Dorr Rebellion.

FROM JOEL TURRILL¹

Dear sir

Honolulu August 29th 47

I mentioned to you in my letter bearing date in may last² that Ladd & c had abandoned their proceedings before the Arbitrators³—That the Minister of Foreign Relations⁴ had returned to Mr Ten Eyck⁵ the draft of the Treaty⁶ together with his objections to the same & &.

The case of, Ladd & co may now be considered as virtually at an end. It can hereafter create little or no excitement in this community. The Minister & commissioner have disagreed as to the terms of the treaty and the proposed Treaty together with the objections to the same has been refered, I understand, to the Secretary at Washington.⁷

I have heretofore expressed my opinion in relation to a Treaty with this Government, and experience confirms me in that opinion. I think it would be decidedly wrong to *ask* more than was *demand*ed by France and England.⁸ We should deal more liberally with these people than did those Powers & leave the courts untouched. The tenure of real estate and the discharge of Seamen should also in my judgment be left entirely to the operation of local laws. We have now, a stronger hold upon this people and Government than can possibly be obtained by the most skillful diplomacy—then why fritter away the power we now have by an attempt at treaty legislation?

I know not what representations may have been made to you in relation to matters here but whatever they may be, I can assure you that the United States have no reason to complain of the position of affairs here, so far at least as the policy, views and acts of the Government are concerned, for in no country except the U.S. are the interest of American citizens more cared for, or better protected. With this people ad Government American influence is in the ascendant—so much so as to excite the jealousy of England.

Commodore Stockton⁹ took a correct view of things and much good resulted from his visit to this place, while Commodore Biddle,¹⁰ threw himself into the arms of those engaged in assailing the King¹¹ & his Government. From them he received his impressions and his course created hopes and expectations which confirmed their opposition and excited them to renewed exertions. He was induced among other things, to advise Mr Ten Eyck to engage as counsel against the King in the exciting case of Ladd & co, when it must have been apparent to the most careless observer, that by so doing he would sacrifice his influence, with the Government by bringing himself immediately in collision with the King and his Ministers.

But notwithstanding the ends resulting from the course pursued by the commissioner and Commodore Biddle the state of affairs has been constanly improving and in every important particular things are in a much better state than they were a year ago.

Soon after taking charge of my office I directed my efforts to the removal of port charges on vessels engaged in the whale fisheries and as you will see by the papers whh I send you,¹² these efforts have been crowned with complete success. This is now a free port for vessels thus employed. This change in the border regulations will save to each whale ship entering the Port upon an average \$53.

The U.S.S Cyane¹³—Capt. DuPont¹⁴ has been here about four weeks and will probably remain a week longer. Her appearance at this Port when the whole fleet was laying to come in has been much service—and the inteligent, impartial straight forward course pursued by her commander will do much towards quieting matters here. Capt D as you will recollect came out in the congress.¹⁵ As an officer and a gentleman he stands deservedly high.

Should the Mexico war terminate soon he may be in Washington within a year. From him you can obtain much interesting information in relation to these Islands.

Since landing here I have sent numerous letter to the U.S. some of them more than fourteen months since but as yet I have not recived an answer to any one of them. If we had a Steamer running from Panama

to the Islands, via, California we should have our U.S. mail regularly ad in much less time.¹⁶ I am in hopes that we will not be long with out a Steamer.

J TURRILL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*Private.*” Postmarked New Bedford, Mass., January 15. See also ALS, draft. HHi. The draft is published in Charles H. Hunter, ed., “The Turrill Collection,” in *Sixty-Sixth Annual Report of the Hawaiian Historical Society, for the Year 1857* (Honolulu: Advertiser Publishing Co., 1958), pp. 31–32.

1. A Vermont native and a Democrat, attorney Turrill (1794–1859) served as U.S. representative from New York, 1833–37, and consul to the Kingdom of Hawaii, 1845–50.

2. Turrill to Polk, May 25, 1847.

3. Ladd and Co., a mercantile firm owned by U.S. citizens, in 1835 founded Hawaii’s first commercially successful sugar cane plantation. Arbitration sought to redress grievances and resolve lawsuits filed by the firm against confiscatory actions taken by the Kingdom of Hawaii in November 1844. The firm argued that the Kingdom’s actions were illegal.

4. Surgeon and businessman Robert C. Wyllie (1798–1865), a native of Scotland, was foreign minister of the Kingdom of Hawaii, 1845–65.

5. Anthony Ten Eyck (1810–67), a Detroit Democrat, was appointed by Polk commissioner to Hawaii in 1845 and served until 1849.

6. Commissioner Ten Eyck had been instructed by Polk and James Buchanan, in September 1845, to negotiate a treaty establishing peace, facilitating trade, and ensuring the rights of U.S. citizens on the islands. Owing to disagreements and delays, the treaty was not signed until December 1849, during the administration of Pres. Zachary Taylor.

7. Ten Eyck enclosed in his dispatch no. 8 to Secretary of State James Buchanan, dated December 21, 1846, a copy of the draft treaty that he submitted, probably the next February, to Hawaii’s government. AD, copy of draft. He enclosed in his dispatch no. 15 to Buchanan, dated May 25, 1847, a copy of Wyllie and Hawaiian Superior Court justice Joane Ii’s objections to that treaty, which they had written in February and sent to Ten Eyck on March 2. D, copy. DNA–RG 59.

8. France and the United Kingdom most recently had signed treaties with Hawaii in 1846. Although Hawaii’s government objected to certain provisions of the European-drafted treaties—particularly regarding the extent of European consular powers to nominate juries in cases involving French or British subjects—King Kamehameha III and his subordinates, in the end, accepted them. Wyllie afterward proposed a new draft treaty to both European governments, but neither agreed to it.

9. Robert F. Stockton (1795–1866), of New Jersey, who served in the navy 1811–26 and 1838–50, commanded the Pacific Squadron, October 1845–January 1847. Commanding forces on land and sea, he participated in the U.S. conquest

of California. He campaigned for Whig presidential candidate William Henry Harrison in 1840 but served in the U.S. Senate as a Democrat, 1851–53.

10. James Biddle (1783–1848), a Philadelphia native, joined the navy in 1800. A captain since 1815, he negotiated treaties with Turkey, 1829–30, and China, 1845, and commanded the Pacific Squadron, March–July 1847.

11. Kamehameha III (1813–54), King of Hawaii from 1825 until his death, was the Kingdom's longest reigning monarch. During his reign Hawaii evolved from an absolute to a constitutional monarchy.

12. Enclosures not found.

13. Its name derived from that of a nymph from Greek mythology, the USS *Cyane*—the second of three ships to bear that name—was a navy sloop-of-war, launched in 1837 and assigned during the Mexican War to the Pacific Squadron. It figured prominently in events in that conflict along California's and Mexico's Pacific coasts, including, in 1846, the landing of U.S. forces at Monterey, California; the transportation of John C. Frémont's California Battalion from Monterey to San Diego; attacks on shore batteries and fortifications at San Blas, Mexico; and the seizure of several Mexican ships at La Paz, near the southern tip of Baja California.

14. Samuel F. Du Pont (1803–65) commanded the *Cyane*. Born in New Jersey, he was a son of French diplomat Victor Marie Du Pont de Nemours, who, after emigrating to the United States, became a prominent politician and businessman. A navy officer since 1815, Samuel served in the Mexican War and the Civil War; he commanded U.S. ships around the world and was known for tactical and technological innovations. Two years before his death, he was promoted to the rank of rear admiral.

15. The USS *Congress*—the fourth naval ship by that name—was launched in 1841 and remained in service until 1862, when it was sunk by a Confederate ironclad, the CSS *Virginia*, off Newport News, Va. Attached to the Pacific Squadron during the Mexican War, the *Congress* participated in the U.S. conquest of California and offensive operations off Mexico's Pacific coast south of California.

16. Mail between Hawaii and the United States, up to the 1840s, traveled over several routes, including around the southern tips of South America and Africa and—less so during the Mexican War—overland across Mexico. Although Turrill probably did not yet know it, a U.S. law of March 3, 1847, had authorized Postmaster General Cave Johnson to contract with steamship operators to carry mail from Charleston, S.C., to Chagres, New Granada (Colombia), via Florida and Cuba, and—once across the Isthmus of Panama—on to Astoria, Oregon, via California. "An Act to establish certain Post Routes and for other Purposes." *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 63. Arnold S. Harris won the Pacific contract but transferred it to William H. Aspinwall, who, in April 1848, cofounded the Pacific Mail Steamship Company to fulfill it. The first of that company's three vessels, the *California*, left New York City for Panama in October. Owing to the discovery of gold in California that year, it carried gold seekers as well as mail from Panama to San Francisco, before proceeding to Oregon. U.S.-Hawaii mail was carried partway on this service, but no regular

transoceanic steam service reached Hawaii until the 1860s. On May 4, 1848, the U.S. House Committee on Naval Affairs reported a bill to create a line of war steamers from California to Hawaii and China, but it never came to a vote.

TO WILLIAM O. BUTLER

My Dear Sir:

Washington City August 30th 1847

I received several days ago, your letter of the 15th¹ in answer to mine of the 7th Instant. I regret to learn from you, the present condition of your wound, and that you continue to be disabled by it, but still hope as you do, that as the cool season approaches, you may gradually recover from its effects. In that hope, and considering as I do, your services as very important to the country, if the war should continue, I repeat the advice which I gave you in my former [letter]² that you should *not* resign. Three or four days ago, I caused a requisition to be made [. . .]³ an additional Volunteer force, viz, for two Regiments of Infantry from Kentucky, Two Regiments from Tennessee, and one from Indiana.⁴ I hope they will be raised promptly. In your letter you inform me, that in the event of a call, you “may be able to assist in their [organisation],⁵ even in your present condition,” and that it will afford you much gratification to do so. I have made this known to the Secretary of War,⁶ who will address you on the subject. You must not understand that you are obligated to perform, even this service, unless, you feel perfectly able to do so. It is only in consequence of the suggestions which you make in your letter, that the Secretary of War will address you. The places of [rounding up] of the two Kentucky Regiments will be at *Louisville* and *Smithland*; of the two Tennessee Regiments, at *Nashville* and *Memphis*; and of the Indiana Regiment at some suitable point on the Ohio River. To all these points you could go, in a *Steamer*, and it may be, that your presence, and general superintendence and decision might facilitate the departure of the troops. I [aim] to have them en *route* for *Vera Cruz*, at the earliest practicable period. Transports will be provided for them, for the sea voyage, at some point above New Orleans, so as not to expose them by any detention at that City, to the epidemic [which] is now prevailing there.

*Majr. Genl. Patterson*⁷ is now in this City, and will proceed to *Vera Cruz*, *via* *Pensacola* in two or three days. If peace is not [won] soon, *Genl. Scott*'s communication with *Vera Cruz* and other points in his rear, must be opened and kept open, and if necessary he must be still further re-inforced. With such a people as the Mexicans, any retrograde movement, or the abandonment of places, once occupied by our forces, would be received by them as evidence of our weakness & would be disastrous.

We have nothing *official* from *Genl. Scott's* army since my last, and nothing unofficial more in detail than has been published in the newspapers. I have serious apprehensions for the safety of the train, under the command of *Majr. Lally*.⁸ It is composed almost wholly, of detachments and single companies, belonging to the Regiments now with *Genl. Scott*, and of undisciplined troops. The movement of this train was a matter decided upon at *Vera Cruz*, & I feared from the moment I heard of it, that the force was too small. I hope it may go through in safety. The entrance of *Paredes*⁹ through *Vera Cruz*, was most unfortunate. His presence in the country, will I fear be calculated to postpone a peace.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Carrollton, Ky.

1. Letter not found.
2. Word uncertain, light and blurred ink transfer.
3. Word either absent or illegible due to a light ink transfer.
4. On this call for troops, see letter and notes in Polk to Aaron V. Brown, August 24, 1847.

5. Word or words here and below uncertain, light or blurred ink transfer.

6. William L. Marcy.

7. Robert Patterson (1792–1881), an Ireland native and Philadelphia merchant and manufacturer, first joined the army during the War of 1812 and later served in the Pennsylvania militia. Rejoining the army in June 1846 as a major general, he led troops against Tampico, Veracruz, and Cerro Gordo before returning to Philadelphia at the end of the Mexican War. A Democrat, he supported Andrew Jackson's election to the presidency in 1828; in 1836 he cast Pennsylvania's electoral vote for Martin Van Buren. He commanded Union forces in the early months of the Civil War.

8. Folliot T. Lally (1816–94), a New York native and Portland, Maine, resident, joined the army in March 1847 as a major. Assigned to the Ninth Infantry Regiment in April, he was brevetted lieutenant colonel for gallantry during encounters with Mexican guerillas at Paso de Ovejas, the National Bridge, and Cerro Gordo while conducting a wagon train from Veracruz to Jalapa (it later continued on to Puebla) in August. After leaving the army in August 1848, he became a Gardiner, Maine, engineer.

9. Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga.

FROM BARBARA ELLEN BERRY HUME¹

Dear Sir,

Washington August 30th 1847

I have made several attempts to see you in person to offer you my most heartfelt thanks, and sincere gratitude for the employment you gave me at the Land Office. You were always engaged & I had to forgo the pleasure of seeing you. I now offer you my most grateful feelings for your kindness—without this assistance I do not know what I should

have done. I have two helpless little daughters, one with an affection of the right leg which I fear will terminate in amputation, she is unable to walk and has to be moved from place to place. Such are some of my afflictions, with poverty, My Dear Sir to contend with.

I have heard that there will be a large increase of this business, & if I could get but one years steady employment, I should be enabled to save enough to get a small house for myself and children, and by teaching school might be able to support them. I have finished the book of Patents sent me, and am desirous that you should see the book—it is large and legible & I trust you will be pleased with it. You can form no idea of my feelings when the glad tidings came, that you had provided work whereby I could feed my children. Nor can you ever measure the grateful & prayerful emotions felt, by your much indebted, . . .

BARBARA E HUME

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received September 2, 1847.

1. Hume (?–c. 1872?), born in Maryland, was a daughter of Prince George's County slaveholder Benjamin Berry. She lived in Nashville and Washington City for much of her life. From the 1840s and for most of the rest of her life, she was employed by the federal government, including, in the 1860s and 1870s, as a clerk in the Bureau of Internal Revenue. Ebenezer J. Hume, whom she had married in Washington City in 1833, apparently had died by the time she wrote this letter, possibly in 1842 while serving on a naval ship.

TO EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Augt. 30th 1847

I have received your letter of the 18th Instant, and am satisfied with the sale which you have made of 160 acres of my land lying near Bolivar. I have executed the Deed for title which you enclosed and herewith return it to you.¹ I wish you of course to retain the two notes of \$240. each for the purchase money, and collect them for me, when they fall due. You state that there is still a remnant of about 36.² acres of the land unsold, which you hope still to sell. I wish you to do so.

If *Mr Robt. I. Chester* has not forwarded to you my Deed for the Dyer County lands, will you, write to him and request him to do so, as soon as it shall have been recorded.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Bolivar, Tenn.

1. Enclosure not found.

2. Polk probably meant to write "56."

only one company had reported. The battalion was finally ready near the end of the year. Its commander, Lt. Col. James P. Anderson, was an elected, volunteer officer.

5. U.S. volunteer forces in Mexico often held elections to select field officers. The declaration of war left their selection to the states, and thus often to the soldiers. The president, however, appointed volunteer generals.

6. "Ned Bucket" was a pseudonym first used by David I. Holt in letters he wrote to politicians and newspapers. Holt died in 1841 but thereafter other anonymous correspondents used the pseudonym. According to politician Alexander H. Stephens, by 1865 Americans had begun to refer to anonymous letters as "Bucket letters."

FROM WILLIAM J. GAMBLE¹

Sir

[Jamestown, Penn.] August 31 1847

Whereas it is at all times and under all governments the duty as well as the privilege of every Citizen let his situation be ever so humble or his possessions ever so Small to Scrutinize and examine the manner in which the government under which he is living is conducted and whether the men who were placed as sentinels to guard and protect her have betrayed their trust or not; therefore although I am but an humble citizen not loaded with riches but proud of being a citizen of the ancient and honourable State of Pennsylvania and knowing that the path to honor and happiness is open to all the poor as well as the rich and that the safety as well as the prosperity of our institutions can only be secured by the untiring diligence and the careful observance of the people I have determined to address a few lines to you in order that I might give to you a partial detail of some things that become every citizen of the United States to meditate on but more particularly it becomes the chief ruler of a mighty nation to weigh well and consider as their influence or example is very powerful and able to go very far in conducting the business of the Nation either for well or no but more particularly am I induced to write to you at this time because we are Coming to a period in our government and the important crisis is fast approaching when all publick men let his name be Whig or Democrat or whatever else he may choose to call himself shall and must meet and give an account to the Sovereign people of this mighty republic an account of the manner in which he or they may have managed the government over which they were placd and that their doings may come to the light and shall be presented in full view to the people that whether good bad or indifferent they may receive their test in order that taking warning from the past they may be more prepared to guard the future knowing that Similar causes will produce similar effects and as coming

events cast their shadows before us will now proceed to an examination of some things connected with our government.

Mr President I hope you will not consider me as meddling or interfering with the business or attempting in any way to embarrass any man but more particularly a man holding so high and exalted a place as you hold whose position is by no means to be envied as I am confident that much trouble and anxiety always attends men in high Situations and that the poor daily labourer as we are all in this part probably enjoys as much if not more real happiness than any king or potentate. I am also far from thinking that any President who may be Selected can give entire satisfaction to all the different sections and interests of our Republic for Sectional prejudices and animositie[s]² and political aspirants will no doubt always exist under our Government as they have uniformly existed under and in all governments however good and solid their foundation. Therefore leaving aside the propriety or impropriety of a protective or a revenue tariff and also the constitutionality or unconstitutionality the propriety or impropriety of a United States Bank³ and omitting the different view of different Sections on other topics which now attract the attention of the day fully coinciding with the Saying long ago expressed that to err is human⁴ and that different individuals will no doubt have honest differences of opinion on such things I will now come to a bearing on the subject of the war with Mexico in which we are now engaged and I greatly fear to the disgrace and contempt of the truly civilized world and to the good and virtuous of this nation and to all who may have at heart the welfare and happiness of his fellow man all of whom have a common origin and were placed here no doubt for some useful and beneficent purpose and therefore those who are guilty of disturbing Such a relation and of exciting as it were two different families of the human race to impure their hands in each others blood are bound to answer for the Same.

Mr President although young (and probably mistaken as youth is apt to be hurried along very often and come to conclusions without due reflection) Yet I most Solemnly believe that as far back as my memory extends the political movements of this country are all verging to the same point namely the perpetuation and extension of human slavery an Institution which deals and trafficks in the bodies and Souls of men women and children who were made after the image of their Creator and endowed with a reasoning faculty and probably capable of rising to the Same degree of perfection as we are and when I see this war waged (I do not say without any provocation on the part of Mexico) and seeing an army sent by your orders (whilst Congress were in Session without instructing them of your intentions) into a territory⁵ as much belonging to Texas as the State of Pennsylvania belongs to the Pope

of Rome⁶ which invasion was the true cause of this war as any honest man may see if he only looks at the facts, territory which in your message to Congress whilst claiming as a part of Texas you yourself said included Santa Fe the capital of new Mexico territory⁷ which Senator Benton⁸ before the annexation of Texas declared that by including it as a part of Texas would be a direct aggression on Mexico and for which the United States would be responsible⁹ territory which includes numerous and populous towns belonging to Mexico and whilst I most Solemnly believe that all this was done in order to increase that most accursed and wicked Institution of Slavery I think that I have full power as far as my influence extends to expose it to the view of all and in conclusion as a friend of Republicanism of justice actuated by no selfish motive I beseech you to examine these things for the time is coming yea has come when Northern men true to the principles of liberty can and must meet them and I beseech you not to add more fuel to the fire which is beginning to burst forth from all parts of our country and which will be impossible to quench unless soon checked.

Mr President I should like to receive an answer from you in relation to the above and I ask you and entreat you as an high minded man having the welfare of all at heart to give me your views on Such and it in my opinion would be very proper that you should make the whole nation fully acquainted with this subject. Please direct to Jamestown Mercer County Pennsylvania.

WILLIAM J GAMBLE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE: received September 8, 1847; "is an abolitionist, *but* writes well."

1. Gamble (1824–88) was born in Boston to Irish immigrant parents. Following his early education, he taught mathematics, Latin, and Greek. He began studying medicine and surgery, around the time he wrote this letter, under a Jamestown, Penn., physician; in 1854 he graduated from Cincinnati's Eclectic Medical Institute. He then practiced medicine in Mosiertown, Penn.

2. Letter cut off side of page.

3. The Second Bank of the United States was a central financial depository chartered by the federal government in 1816 for twenty years. Andrew Jackson, who believed it to be antidemocratic and to give too much power to too few people, waged a war against it as president. He vetoed a new charter in 1832 and subsequently ended federal deposits. It ceased to exist as a federal bank when its initial charter expired in 1836.

4. Though used earlier, including by Roman authors St. Jerome and Seneca, this phrase in English is associated chiefly with Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism* (1711): "To Err is *Humane*; to forgive, *Divine*."

5. On the U.S. Army's entering the area between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande, see note in Andrew Lane to Polk, August 3, 1847.

6. Pius IX was pope at this time.

7. Polk, in his Second Annual Message to Congress, December 8, 1846, did not name Santa Fe. He did, however, defend the Rio Grande as Texas's "western boundary," a demarcation that included the city within that state's borders. Gamble's "new Mexico territory" reference is to the Republic of Mexico's territory of New Mexico, of which Santa Fe was the capital. The territory (or, from 1836 to 1846, department) covered a large section of today's American Southwest between Alta California and Texas. It included much of today's state of New Mexico but stretched north into today's Colorado. On the temporary U.S. government established for New Mexico in September 1846, see letter and notes in George T. Wood to Polk, March 23, 1848.

8. Thomas H. Benton (1782–1858), a Missouri Democrat, served in the U.S. Senate, 1821–51. During the later years of his public career, he became one of that body's most powerful figures, particularly in the shaping of policies concerning the federal government's newly acquired domains in the West. Benton was a friend and usually a political ally of Polk until 1848, when Polk tacitly supported court-martial proceedings against Benton's son-in-law, army-sponsored explorer John C. Frémont.

9. Benton opposed including the disputed land in Texas at the time of the war declaration in 1846, but Gamble probably refers to his speech in the Senate in May 1844 against a treaty (eventually rejected) that would have annexed Texas. In that speech Benton mentioned—as an absurdity—that, under the treaty, Texas would have included Santa Fe.

FROM RICHARD RUSH¹

Dear Sir,

Paris August 31. 1847

Availing myself of your permission to write to you occasionally in a private and unofficial manner, I beg to write a few lines now to go with a dispatch I am sending off today to the Secretary of State,² though in truth having nothing as yet to say. I nevertheless write, if only to recall to myself and you, the kind license you gave me. The present is what they call "the dead season"³ in Paris. On the adjournment of the chambers⁴ the early part of this month, the court, and members of the government for the most part, went out of town, Mr Guizot⁵ with the rest. The diplomatic corps are also much dispersed. It will be I understand a month or two if not more, before official persons may be expected to reassemble in Paris again. The King⁶ came to St Cloud,⁷ one of his palaces five or six miles from town, a day or two ago, to hold a council with his ministers on public matters, the nature of which I have not yet had the means of learning with sufficient accuracy to speak of to you. Should the king remain any time at St Cloud and receive at this season

the foreign ministers, I will go there. Mr Guizot I learn, after attending the council, returned to his country residence yesterday.

I have not yet been able to find a house to suit me, though I have been almost every day pretty industriously at work in endeavors to do so. In good time, I hope to succeed and shall then begin to feel myself more settled than in the temporary rooms I took at a hotel in the Rue Rivoli on first arriving last month, and where I still am. I rejoice with our American friends at the account of Scotts entrance into Mexico⁸; for although we have nothing as yet official here, or absolutely certain, I cannot help believing it on the faith of the information which reached us yesterday. I should rather prefer *not* to see the King again, until we have it as an absolute certainty.

The shocking murder of the duchess de Praslin⁹ is still a topick, every day seeming to bring out new items in its cruelty and wickedness. The newspapers relate all so fully, that I could add nothing.

Asking my kind compliments to Mrs Polk, I beg you dear Sir to believe in the warm attachment and respect with which, . . .

RICHARD RUSH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Lawyer and newspaper editor Richard Rush (1780–1859), son of Founding Father Benjamin Rush, served as minister to France, 1847–51. Earlier he had been comptroller of the Treasury, 1811–14; U.S. attorney general, 1814–17; minister to the United Kingdom, 1818–25; and Treasury secretary, 1825–29. In 1828 he ran as vice president on the ticket headed by John Quincy Adams, as Adams sought, without success, a second term in office.

2. Rush's dispatch no. 5 to James Buchanan was dated August 31, 1847, and related chiefly to U.S. relations with Switzerland and the Kingdom of Sardinia. ALS. DNA–RG 59.

3. "La morte-saison."

4. During France's July Monarchy (1830–48), the Chamber of Deputies was the lower house and the Chamber of Peers was the upper house of the nation's bicameral parliament.

5. Historian and statesman François Guizot (1787–1874), a leading political figure, held successive government positions during Louis Philippe's reign, including that of prime minister, 1847–48.

6. The constitutional monarch Louis Philippe (1773–1850), who styled himself King of the French, reigned from 1830 until 1848, when angry Parisian crowds forced his abdication.

7. Situated approximately three miles west of Paris, the Château de Saint-Cloud was a palace, with origins stretching back to the sixteenth century, that was occupied by French royalty until its destruction in 1870 during the Franco-Prussian War. The site is now occupied by a public park, the Parc de Saint-Cloud.

8. Rush may refer to false rumors of Winfield Scott's having taking Mexico City. That did not happen until the next month.

9. In the early hours of August 18, 1847, Fanny Altarice Rosalba, Duchess of Choiseul-Praslin, (1807–47) was beaten and stabbed to death in the bedroom of her Paris residence. In the investigation of the killing, suspicions immediately fell on her husband, Charles Laure Hugues Théobald, Duke of Choiseul-Praslin, (1805–47) a member of the Chamber of Deputies. He was arrested. On August 29, however, while in police custody, the duke committed suicide by ingesting a poison, possibly arsenic. His death sparked still more controversy. Persistent rumors asserted that the police, at the behest of French nobility who feared an embarrassing trial, supplied the poison—or that the suicide never occurred and that the duke had been allowed to flee to England, where he spent his remaining years. Such rumors contributed to the atmosphere in Paris in February 1848, when angry mobs compelled Louis Phillipe's abdication.

SEPTEMBER

FROM ROMULUS M. SAUNDERS¹

My dear Sir

Paris Sept. 1 1847

I regret that I am constrained to ask the recall of Mr. Reynolds² as Secretary of the Legation at Madrid.

You will learn from the despatch written on my departure, that I left him in charge of the affairs of the Legation, with the express instructions that all communications to the government of Spain, and to the department upon important subjects would be made by me—or if by Mr. Reynolds, after advising with me or through me.³

Some weeks after my departure and after the termination of the affair about the Privateer⁴—he applied, to have those instructions changed, so as to allow him to make his communications directly without my intervention—this I declined. You will learn therefore with surprise, that since my return to this place and within the last ten days, I have got possession of several of his despatches—sent here to be forwarded without any calculation of my seeing them & that upon important and delicate subjects. In his despatch No 17 which from the nature of the subject will be laid before you—as you will see, not content with the duties of Minister he has assumed to himself those of Secretary of State.⁵ You will also see, from my note to Mr. Buchanan of this date in forwarding despatches No's 20, 23 & 24 I have been forced to express my disapproval.⁶ I cannot ask you to read those lengthy papers—but you will learn from Mr. B—they contain the most indelicate charge against Mr. Calhoun—reflections upon the inefficiency of Mr. Irving & abuse of M Calderon⁷—that his despatch about the Palace question not only contains remarks in regard to the Queen grossly scandalous but charges the Duke de Sautamayor a gentleman of high character of American descent of advising assassination⁸—all this scandal I heard long since—which Mr. Reynolds has picked up as second hand, which

I did discredit at the time and do not believe, & which I never thought for a moment of putting into a public despatch. From this you will see I have been forced to put on file my disapproval of his conduct—which he has persevered in, in violence of instructions & through out has treated me with marked disrespect. I cannot therefore consent to a renewal of our social relations. And indeed he has exhibited such feelings towards others & such a propensity for scandal—that I do not consider myself or my family as safe in the hands of such a man.

You will recollect the circumstances under which he was appointed so that I think I may say he has acted towards me with gross ingratitude. I know that I am asking you to do an unpleasant thing, but really with all of Mr. Reynolds talents, I do not consider him a proper person for his station—and as I shall be forced hereafter to hold with him only an official intercourse, it will be extremely unpleasant to say nothing of the public interest.

Should you decide to recall Mr. Reynolds I am willing to take any one you may see fit to send. But as it is important that the Secretary should speak both the French & Spanish languages, I would respectfully recommend Arthur L Payson⁹ as in every respect qualified. He was for some time with your brother¹⁰ at Naples, was during the last winter with me at Madrid, was highly useful & Popular. He is now in England, or has returned to the United States. A letter to the care of the Post Master at Boston¹¹ will find him—As his father¹² who was the American Consul I believe in Italy now resides in the neighbourhood of Cambridge. I shall write to him.

I regret to say that the indisposition of my family has detained me thus long.

R. M. SAUNDERS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received September 22, 1847. Published in ULNCP–Ju, pp. 249–50.

1. Saunders (1791–1867), a North Carolina–born lawyer, was minister to Spain, 1846–49. He also served in his native state's legislature, 1815, 1817, 1819, and 1850–52; in the U.S. House, 1821–27 and 1841–45; as a superior court judge, 1835–40 and 1852–56; and as state attorney general, 1828–31. His bond with Polk, who appointed him to the Madrid post, had been secured when, at the 1844 Democratic National Convention, Saunders sponsored the change in convention rules that required the party's presidential nominee to win two-thirds of the delegates' votes—thus effectively eliminating expected nominee Martin Van Buren from contention.

2. Thomas Cate Reynolds (1821–87), legation secretary to Spain since 1846, was a native of South Carolina who had moved with his family to Virginia. While traveling in Europe and, in 1842, earning a doctorate in jurisprudence

at the University of Heidelberg, he learned Spanish, French, German, and Latin. He then became a Virginia lawyer until appointed by Polk to the post in Madrid. In 1860 he was elected as Missouri's lieutenant governor; two years later, when the governor died, Reynolds acceded to that office. Despite this letter and Sanders's of December 20, 1847, calendared herein, Reynolds was not recalled until 1849. Shortly thereafter he wrote an article, published in the Charleston (S.C.) *Courier* of March 22 and subsequently in other newspapers, exposing the Polk administration's recent effort, through Saunders, to purchase Cuba from Spain.

3. Saunders announced his departure for France, to visit his family, and his leaving Reynolds in charge of the legation in his dispatch no. 11 to James Buchanan, dated May 1, 1847. LS in Reynolds's hand. DNA-RG 59.

4. Reference is to a diplomatic imbroglio resultant of the early 1847 capture off Gibraltar of an American merchant vessel, the *Carmelita*, by a Spanish ship, the *Único*. Mexico's government had issued the latter a letter of marque, an authorization to plunder enemy merchant ships. During the Mexican War, widespread fears persisted in U.S. civilian and military quarters that the Mexican government would dispatch privateers against the U.S. civilian fleet. The Mexican Congress did, in June 1846, authorize commissioning privateers, and U.S. officials quickly countered that any crew engaging in such activities would, if captured, be dealt with harshly, likely hanged. Few such Mexican ships were deployed, however, and none successfully. Mexico offered privateer commissions to foreigners in Europe and the Caribbean but recruited only two Spanish ships. The *Carmelita* was the only ship known to have been captured by privateers.

5. Reynolds's dispatch no. 17 to Buchanan, dated July 8, 1847, concerns Spanish claims relating to the *Amistad*. ALS. DNA-RG 59. In 1839 enslaved Africans aboard that Spanish ship, bound for a port in Cuba, took control of the vessel and, though intending to return to Africa, landed in the United States. Two years later the U.S. Supreme Court declared them (with one exception) free. Over the next several years, Spain lodged a series of protests, demanding indemnification for the ship, cargo, and slaves. Congress considered authorizing the payment but did not pass a bill. Polk and Buchanan supported payment. On June 19, 1847, after receiving Spain's latest protest—with a threat to halt payments to the United States relating to a treaty of 1834—Reynolds, to Buchanan's annoyance, responded with a firm denial of the United States' legal obligation to pay the claims but an assurance that Polk likely would obtain the funds from Congress. Polk did recommend payment in his Third Annual Message to Congress, but without success. Though congressional and diplomatic discussions continued until the Civil War, the U.S. government never paid the claims.

6. ALS. Reynolds's dispatch no. 20 to Buchanan, dated July 27, 1847, chiefly discusses U.K.-Spain relations. ALS. DNA-RG 59.

7. Dispatch no. 23, dated August 18, 1847, chiefly discusses Cuba and the potential for U.S. action there. It criticizes John C. Calhoun's, Washington Irving's, and Ángel Calderón de la Barca's communications on the topic during

their tenures as, respectively, U.S. secretary of state (1844–45), U.S. minister to Spain (1842–46), and Spanish minister to the United States (1835–39 and 1844–53). ALS. DNA–RG 59. Irving (1783–1859), a native of New York City and a resident of Tarrytown, N.Y., served as an attaché to the legation to Spain, 1826–29; legation secretary to the United Kingdom, 1829–31; chargé d'affaires, *ad interim*, there, 1831; and minister to Spain. He trained as a lawyer and worked for a time as a merchant, but soon became one of America's most popular writers. Among his numerous works are *A History of New York* (1809), *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819–20)—which includes his stories “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow” and “Rip Van Winkle”—and *The Alhambra* (1832). Calderón de la Barca (1790–1861), born in Buenos Aires, served, besides as minister to the United States and in other political and diplomatic posts, as Spain's first minister to the newly independent Mexico, 1839–42.

8. In dispatch no. 24, dated August 19, Reynolds reports on the “Palace Question,” an 1847 scandal resulting from Queen Isabella II's romantic relationship with Francisco Serrano y Domínguez, Duke of la Torre, and her rumored pregnancy with his child. According to Reynolds, Cárlos Fernando Martínez de Irujo, Marqués de Casa-Irujo, Duke of Sotomayor, president of the Council of Ministers, privately and unofficially advised Francisco de Asís de Borbón, the king consort, to murder Serrano. ALS. DNA–RG 59. Saunders dismisses the pregnancy rumor and the assassination-advice claim in his cover letter. Isabella II (1830–1904) reigned from 1833 to 1868. Sotomayor (1790s or c. 1805–1855), born in Washington City while his father was minister to the United States, served Spain in a variety of political and diplomatic posts. He was both minister of state and president of the Council of Ministers, January 28–March 28, 1847, and again minister of state, October 23, 1847–July 29, 1848.

9. Among other diplomatic posts, Arthur L. Payson (c. 1823–1855), a Boston merchant, served as acting consul at Messina, Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, 1845–46, and acting legation secretary to Spain, early in 1847. A polyglot, he was for several years an examiner in modern languages at Harvard University.

10. William H. Polk.

11. Nathaniel Greene (1797–1877), born in New Hampshire, worked at several newspapers there and in Massachusetts before becoming founding editor of the Boston *Statesman*, eventually a Democratic paper, 1821–29. Charles G. Greene's brother, he served as postmaster at Boston, 1829–41 and 1844–49. In 1841 he was the unsuccessful Democratic nominee for Boston mayor. He translated several Italian and German works into English.

12. Boston merchant John L. Payson (1797–1884), Arthur L. Payson's father, served as consul at Messina, 1827–46. He had graduated from Harvard University in 1817, along with George Bancroft and Caleb Cushing.

TO JAMES BUCHANAN

Sir: Washington Sept. 2nd 1847

During the temporary absence of the Secretary of War, from the seat of Government,¹ you are hereby appointed Acting Secretary of War, and are requested to take charge of that Department.

JAMES K. POLK

ANS. PHI.

1. On William L. Marcy's "absence," see letter and notes in Polk to John Y. Mason, August 18, 1847.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

My Dear Sir: Washington City Sept. 2nd 1847

I have constituted *Mr V. K. Stevenson*¹ of Nashville my agent to attend to the property which I have bought in that place, and as he will need money [for]² to enable him to do so, according to my instructions, I request that you will hand over to him, taking his receipt for the same, the two notes of *Mr Evan Young*³ which you hold. This you can do, the first time you go to Nashville, or when it shall be convenient to you.

In one of your letters, you mentioned that it might not be convenient for you to visit my plantation this fall or winter.⁴ I still hope however that you may be enabled to do so. If however you cannot go down, I wish you to inform me, and I will write to *Mr Leigh*,⁵ and request him to settle up the accouts of the plantation at the end of the year. I would much prefer it that you should do it, if you can, because you understand all my business. I wish the blacksmith Harry⁶ to be brought home at the beginning of the next year, and, with that view have ordered a set of blacksmith's tools to be sent up from New Orleans.⁷ Will you inform me whether you made a contract with *Mr Marrs*⁸ for the next year. I wish to retain him, and would to pay, him, high wages, rather than risk another.

I desire to sell my store-house in Columbia. Is there any prospect of selling it? What would it bring on one and two years time?

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

1. Vernon K. Stevenson.

2. Word uncertain, light ink transfer.

3. Young, in April 1847, bought Polk's house and stable on Market Street in Columbia, Tenn. Columbia at the time did not have street numbers; the location is now 316 West 7th Street. A Columbia businessman, Young (1797–1852) was one of the first trustees of that town's Columbia Female Institute.

4. Letter not found. Polk had purchased this Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation, with the since-deceased Silas M. Caldwell, in 1834. At Polk's death in 1849, he owned fifty-six slaves there.

5. John T. Leigh (1786–1850), a native of Amelia County, Va., served as clerk of the superior and county courts there, 1810–38, before moving to Yalobusha County in 1838. There he owned a plantation near Polk's.

6. "Long Harry" (late 1790s–?), who had worked as a blacksmith since 1811, probably became Polk's property when Samuel Washington Polk died in 1839. He worked in Columbia and West Tennessee until, probably in 1840, Polk sent him to Carrollton, Miss., near where his enslaved wife lived. In both states, Polk hired out Harry, giving him exceptional independence. In 1848, however, Polk moved him to the plantation, away from his children and his second wife. (Earlier volumes of this series identify him variously as Harry, Blacksmith Harry, and Long Harry.)

7. Letter to Pickett, Perkins & Co. not found.

8. Polk misspelled the name of John A. Mairs (c. 1807–1880s?), a Virginia native and the overseer of Polk's plantation since 1845.

TO JANE KNOX POLK¹

Dear Mother:

Washington City Sept. 2nd 1847

Brother *William*² has resigned his mission to Naples, and left this City this morning to join the army under the command of *Genl. Scott*, as a *Major of Dragoons*.³ He has been anxious to participate in the Mexican War from the moment he heard that it had broken out. He wrote to me several times from Naples on the subject.⁴ I was under the impression that it would be of short duration and did not at first encourage him. On his arrival here from Europe he still urged it, and again on his return from Tennessee. I could not but appreciate the patriotic feeling which prompted him, and yielded to his wishes. Indeed I fully approve the course he has taken. All things considered, it was probably the best thing he could have done. He left in fine health and spirits, and will be accompanied to *Vera Cruz*, by the way of *Pensacola*, by *Majr. Genl. Patterson*,⁵ and some other officers. It so, happened, on his return from Tennessee, that I was enabled to appoint him a *Major of Dragoons*, which is an eligible and desirable position in the army. I have great confidence that he will acquit himself well. His wife⁶ is now with us, and will remain here for a few weeks, when she will return to her friends in New York. She is a sensible discreet woman, and although she would have preferred that he should not have gone to the army, she is reconciled to it. She is not handsome, but is well educated and intelligent and I am pleased with her. *Saml P. Walker*⁷ and *Mr Barnett* and *Jane*⁸ spent ten days with us, and left on yesterday for New York. *Knox*⁹

left this morning and will join them there. My health continues to be good. It was never better. I have eighteen months of my term remaining. My duties have been very laborious and responsible. I look forward with pleasure to the close of my public career. At the end of my term I shall cheerfully and voluntarily retire to private life, and be a quiet and contented citizen, leaving the cares and anxieties of official station to others. I am glad to learn that you are in the enjoyment of your usual health.¹⁰ I should be much gratified to see you, but this I cannot do, for the next eighteen months. I wrote to *James H. Thomas* to day, and requested him to call on you, before he left home for Washington, and furnish you with such amount as you may need, for your comfort. You must not hesitate to inform him what amt. you may want, and he will hand it to you. I wrote to *Mr Thomas* because he has probably made some collections for me, but whether he has or not, he will hand to you whatever amount you may want. *Sarah*¹¹ is very well, and sends her love to you.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

1. Jane Knox Polk (1776–1852), the president's mother, lived in Columbia, Tenn. Born in Iredell County, N.C., and married to Samuel Polk in Mecklenburg County, N.C., in 1794, she had been a widow since 1827.

2. William H. Polk.

3. Dragoons were soldiers on horseback.

4. William H. Polk to Polk, November 6, 1846; William H. Polk to Polk, November 20, 1846.

5. Robert Patterson.

6. Mary Louise Corse Polk (1816–51), daughter of Israel Corse, a wealthy Quaker tanner of New York City, and Abigail Cornell Doughty (or Doty) Corse, was William H. Polk's second wife. They married in New York City on June 29, 1847.

7. Samuel P. Walker (1814–70), Polk's nephew and the eldest son of James and Jane Maria Polk Walker, was a Memphis lawyer and businessman. With William S. Pickett and William M. Perkins, he ran the New Orleans and Memphis cotton brokerage house of Pickett, Perkins & Co.

8. Isaac N. Barnett (c. 1817–1884), a Kentucky-born lawyer, and Jane Clarissa Walker (1820–99), a Tennessee-born sister of Samuel P. Walker, were married in Columbia, Tenn., on June 21, 1842.

9. Joseph Knox Walker.

10. Polk likely refers to John Catron to Polk, July 14, 1847.

11. Sarah Childress Polk.

TO JAMES H. THOMAS

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Sept. 2nd 1847

I received your letter of the 10th ult with its enclosures some days ago. The Deed from *J. Knox Walker*¹ *Trustee &c*, and *William H. Polk* to me, for the one, undivided half of the House & lots, in Columbia, at present occupied by my Mother,² has been duly acknowledged by them, and certified by the Judicial officers of this District for registration in Tennessee, & I herewith enclose it to you,³ and request that you will have it recorded in Maury County, and bring it with you, when you come on, in November. The Bill of \$1485 15/100, being the amount of the consideration for the property which you draw on me, has been presented to me and been paid.

Before you leave home, I request that you will call on mother, and furnish her with any sum she may need, to enable her to purchase her groceries & close up her accounts at the end of the year.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. My brother *William H. Polk* has resigned his mission to the Two Sicilies & set out this morning for *Vera Cruz*, as *Majr. of Dragoons*. It was his own choice and I gratified him. He goes down in company with *Majr. Genl. Patterson*,⁴ whom he will join this evening on the route. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

1. Joseph Knox Walker.

2. Jane Knox Polk.

3. See letter and notes in Thomas to Polk, August 10, 1847, for enclosure.

4. Robert Patterson.

FROM ALFRED BALCH¹

Dear Sir,

Buena Vista White County Ten 3d Septe 1847

The annunciation of Taylor as a candidate for the Presidency was one of the chief causes of our late defeat. His victories have made a deep impression upon the public mind. Before the election those who never fail to take the strongest side, if they can find it imagined that the General must be your successor. Having nothing to hope from you they fixed their hopes upon him and enlisted under his standard. There being but little difference between the strength of the great parties of the state those who go for the highest bounty took the side of the Whigs and turned the scale in their favor. Still the Democrats fought

gallantly as the returns fully prove. There were 2500 more democratic votes polled in 47 than in 45.

How the hero of Buena Vista² will get on without committing himself upon any of the great questions of the day, I am unable to foresee. To Dr Deloney he writes that he knows nothing about the constitutionality of a Bank or the expediency of a tariff for protection. That he has no time to study these questions at present.³ It seems to me that the Genl might know something, about these vital measures as one of them has been under discussion for 55 years and the other for 23. In the present condition of our political affairs I think that Mr. Ritchie⁴ should exercise abundant caution and wait for the whigs to take the lead and shew their hands.

That all the Whigs of the Valley of the Mississippi are not for Taylor I personally know. That he however is personally devoted to many leading men of that party I also personally know.

It is stated to me by those in whom I have confidence that Taylor is opposed decidedly to the Wilmot Proviso. If we shall obtain the Californias as an indemnification for the expenses of the War with Mexico this question must be met at once and forthwith forever settled.

I dread the opening of a campaign in our State with Taylor [in]⁵ as the Whig candidate for the presidency. We shall loose all those who go for the popular side, as we did in 36 when White was in the field.⁶ Ever since then we have been working to get the seceders back and now if Taylor takes a few thousands from us Ten will become a decidedly Whig state—which may God in his mercy forbid.

With kind respects to Mrs Polk

ALFRED BALCH

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received September 13, 1847.

1. A Nashville lawyer and influential political strategist, Balch (1785–1853) accepted an appointment to a four-year term as judge of the U.S. Middle District of Florida in 1840, but resigned his judgeship before the end of his term and declined all subsequent overtures to run for public office.

2. Reference is to Zachary Taylor and to his victory in the Battle of Buena Vista, fought on February 22–23, 1847, seven miles south of the town of Saltillo. It was the last major battle of the Mexican War fought in Mexico's north and was one of the key military triumphs that propelled Taylor's successful 1848 presidential campaign.

3. In his June 9, 1847, reply to a request from Edward Deloney (or Delony) for his political opinions, Taylor declines to express his views on the Mexican War due to "my duties and the position I occupy." He declines to comment on a national bank and protective tariffs because "I could only do so after duly

investigating those subjects, which I cannot now do; my whole time being fully occupied in attending to my proper official duties." Taylor declares, "I have no aspirations" for the presidency "and regret the subject has been agitated at this early day," but if the American people "elect me, I will feel bound to serve them." Taylor's letter was published in several newspapers in August and September, including the Clinton *Louisiana Floridian*, August 7, and the Richmond (Va.) *Enquirer*, August 20. In 1848 the Democratic National Committee, opposing those favoring Taylor's candidacy for the presidency, published an eight-page booklet attacking his reticence on slavery and other key issues, entitled "*It is a Right Inherent in Every Freeman to Possess Himself of the Political Principles and Opinions of Those Into Whose Hands the Administration of the Government May be Placed.*"—*Gen. Taylor to Mr. Deloney*. Deloney (c. 1803–1867), a Virginia-born physician in Clinton, La., was a state senator. In 1858 he published an article, "The South Demands More Negro Labor," in *Debow's Review*.

4. Virginia-born reformer, politician, and journalist Thomas Ritchie (1778–1854), former editor of the Richmond *Enquirer*, published and edited the Washington *Union*. The organ for the Polk administration, the *Union* was the successor publication to the Washington *Globe*, which had served the same purpose for the presidencies of Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren.

5. Text, inserted by Balch, uncertain.

6. In the 1836 presidential race, eventually won by Democrat Martin Van Buren, Hugh L. White ran—as did William Henry Harrison—as a Whig candidate. White carried but two states, Georgia and Tennessee, garnering twenty-six electoral votes and finishing third, far behind Van Buren (170) and Harrison (73). Born in North Carolina, White (1773–1840) had studied law in Pennsylvania and become a Knoxville, Tenn., lawyer. He served as a state supreme court judge, 1801–7 and 1809–15; in the state senate, 1807–9 and 1817–19; and as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Tennessee, 1808 or 1808–9. He served in the U.S. Senate, 1825–40. Previously a Democrat, he helped found the Tennessee Whig party through his 1836 presidential candidacy.

TO JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear Sir:

Washington City Sept. 3rd 1847

I have received your letter of the 21st of August, and also several others of previous date which you had addressed to me.¹ I was glad to learn that the worm² had done but little damage to your cotton, and that the prospect of making a fair crop was good.

I wish you to have the cotton shipped for *Troy*³ as you did last year, consigned to the commission house of *Pickett Perkins & Co*⁴ of New Orleans. As fast as you gather it from the field, have it ginned and sent to *Troy*, & give directions to my merchant at *Troy*,⁵ to have it shipped by the first rise of water. I wish you to send to me as you did last [year]⁶ the no. & weights of the bales, as you make them and send them off. *Mr Leigh* wrote me some time ago that he had compromised one of the

suits which had been brought against you, for a part of my land which had been sold for the taxes, and that [he] thought it probable he would compromise the suit which had been brought for the 40 acre block.⁷ Whatever sum he has or may pay for me, I will direct *Col. Campbell*⁸ to refund to him when he goes down in the winter. I wish you to be particular hereafter in paying all my taxes. I have ordered a set of blacksmith's tools to be sent up from New Orleans to *Troy* for the use of my plantation. I wish my blacksmith *Harry*,⁹ who is now hired out at Carrollton, brought home at the end of this year. You can have a shop, built for him, and he can do my own work, and also some for the neighbourhood.

Mr A. Lockridge who resides in your neighbourhood, has written to me & requested me to contribute something towards the building of a House of Worship.¹⁰ He states that it is convenient to my plantation & that some of my servants, will attend worship at it. You can inform him that I will request *Col. Campbell* when he goes down, to pay whatever sum he and yourself may think right towards it.

I wish you to continue to write to me every month, as you have done for some time past.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Yalobusha County, Miss.

1. Mairs to Polk, May 24, 1847; Mairs to Polk, June 27, 1847; Mairs to Polk, July 25, 1847.

2. Reference is likely to the cotton worm or the bollworm. Both, along with butterflies and moths, belong to the order Lepidopterous. The cotton worm (*Aletia argillacea*), in its larval state, eats the leaves of cotton. It also feeds on corn, in which case it is called the corn worm. The larvae of bollworms, which include species of several genera, also eat the cotton plant as well as other crops.

3. Polk owned a warehouse at Troy, in eastern Mississippi. There he stored cotton grown on his Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation until rains swelled the waters of the nearby Yalobusha River to a level sufficient for a boat to transport the shipment downriver toward New Orleans.

4. Formerly known as William S. Pickett & Co., the cotton brokerage house of Pickett, Perkins & Co. consisted of Pickett, William M. Perkins, and Samuel P. Walker. It was originally based in New Orleans and then added a second office at Memphis. Pickett married Polk's niece, Mary Eliza Walker, in 1842.

5. Polk refers to Troy merchant Thomas W. Beale (c. 1815–1860s?). Other letters in Polk's correspondence indicate that Beale oversaw receipts at Polk's Troy warehouse and forwarded them to his Yalobusha County plantation or to Pickett, Perkins & Co. in 1847 and 1848. Born in Kentucky, Beale became postmaster at Troy in 1851 and had a farm by 1860.

6. Word here and below uncertain, light ink transfer. Reference is to Mairs to Polk, January 1, 1846; Mairs to Polk, December 17, 1846; and possibly other letters, not found.

7. Reference is to John T. Leigh to Polk, May 25(?), 1847, not found but mentioned in Polk to Leigh, June 8, 1847. Polk learned in early 1847 that two sections of his Yalobusha County plantation had been sold for nonpayment of taxes several years earlier, probably the result of then-overseer Isaac H. Dismukes's error. The purchaser, John K. Rayburn, at first refused to sell the sections back to Polk and sued to retain them. Rayburn (1795–1857), a Virginia native and a veteran of the War of 1812, served as Wayne County, Tenn., sheriff, 1822–34, and in the Tennessee Senate, 1833–35. After his term ended, he moved to Panola County, Miss., serving in the Mississippi Senate, 1837–39, and as U.S. marshal for the Northern District of Mississippi, 1848–49.

8. Robert Campbell, Jr.

9. Long Harry.

10. Andrew Lockridge to Polk, July 21, 1847. Lockridge (c. 1797–1850s?), a planter in Yalobusha County, had moved there from his native North Carolina in the 1830s.

TO VERNON K. STEVENSON

Dear Sir:

Washington City Sept. 3rd 1847

Col. Robert Campbell Jr. of Columbia, has sold a part of my property at that place, and holds, two notes payable to me, on *Mr Evan Young*, the one for \$2000. due on the 1st of January next, and the other for \$1000. bearing interest, due on the 1st of January 1849. I have written to him to hand these notes over to you, the first time he visits Nashville.¹ I wish you to receive them from him, and either retain them in your possession, or deposit them for safe keeping as you may prefer, in the Union Bank,² until their maturity and payment. *Mr Young* is a punctual man, and will pay them I have no doubt when they fall due. I intend the amt. to be applied towards the improvement and repairs of my house and lot in Nashville. I have several hundred dollars due me at Bolivar, a part of which has been collected, and which I can direct to be paid over to you, when you may need it, about the improvements and repairs. I wrote to you early in the last month,³ returning the plan of improvement of the House and premises, and approving in pencil the modifications stated. When you have made the contract I request that you will advise me of it.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. One modification of the improvement, upon which I must insist is, that the roof shall be of *copper or slate* or some other *fire-proof material*. I would not like to have it covered with tin. I believe I mentioned this to you in my last letter. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

1. Polk to Campbell, September 2, 1847.

2. Presumably reference is to the Columbia branch of the Union Bank of Tennessee.

3. Polk to Stevenson, August 10, 1847.

FROM JAMES H. HAMMOND¹

Dear Sir,

New York 4 Sept. 1847

I have seen it announced that your Brother² has resigned his post at Naples & as it may be that you have not yet determined his Successor, I venture to suggest the name of Mr. Wm Gilmore Simms³ of South Carolina. Mr Simms is & for several years has been extremely desirous of a Diplomatic appointment to one of the Italian courts & although, as he is now in So Ca I have not communicated with him since the vacancy has happened, I know that a much cherished desire would be gratified if he was selected to fill it. He is—as you are probably aware—a distinguished, I believe I may say the most distinguished literary character of the South. He has been eminently successful as a writer in various departments of literature—in History, Biography, Poetry & Fiction. Possessing a mind of the very highest order, which he has assiduously cultivated under difficult circumstances, & having yet scarcely reached the prime of life, he promises as fairly as any man living who has not already done it, to achieve a reputation that shall go down to future ages. Literary merit has long been justly recognized, both here & in Europe as a prominent qualification for public & particularly for diplomatic Stations. I believe however that no Southern man has as yet received any appointment on that ground. At least I remember none. I am sure that no man of letters could be selected whose promotion would be more acceptable to the South than Mr. Simms' & I know of no reason why it should not be equally so to every section of our country.

Mr Simms is by no means defunct in political information & experience. He has served with much credit to himself in our State Legislature. And I may not be amiss to add, that he was entirely in favour of your election to the Presidency & so far as I know cordially approves, in common with myself, the leading measures of your administration.

I am well aware, that I am trespassing upon you in making this application in behalf of Mr. Simms, & that as coming from me it can be entitled to but slight consideration. Believing however that you are disposed to fill all your appointments in the best possible manner, & to reward the meritorious, I have laid aside that delicacy which under ordinary circumstances would have prevented me from intruding on you. I beg you will pardon the very great liberty I have taken, & believe me to be

J. H. HAMMOND

ALS. DLC–JHH. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. South Carolina native Hammond (1807–64) was, over a lifetime of impassioned public engagement, a lawyer, teacher, journalist, publisher, planter, and politician. He served in the U.S. House, 1835–36; as South Carolina governor, 1842–44; and in the U.S. Senate, 1857–60. After completing his studies at South Carolina College (now the University of South Carolina), Columbia, in 1825, he established a law practice in Columbia in 1828 and established a newspaper to support John C. Calhoun's position in the Nullification Crisis. During and after that standoff, Hammond emerged as one of the South's key public defenders of slavery and as a key architect of political arguments, eventually leading to secessionism, advanced by the region's planter class.

2. William H. Polk.

3. William Gilmore Simms (1806–70), a native of Charleston, S.C., who lived much of his life in or near that city, ranked among the South's most prominent writers of his era. Most of his novels, such as *The Yemassee* (1835) and *The Partisan* (1835), were set in South Carolina's low country. Through extensive readings and travels, however, he possessed a deep familiarity with other parts of the South that enabled him to set several novels in the region's hinterlands. Simms also wrote poetry, biographies, and a history of his state and edited newspapers and literary journals, including the *Magnolia* and the *Southern Quarterly Review*. The latter expressed his views on sectional issues, including the defense of slavery. During the Nullification Crisis, he favored Andrew Jackson's pro-Union position. By 1861, however, his lifelong defense of slavery had transformed him into a vigorous defender of the recently formed Confederacy. Simms served in South Carolina's legislature, 1844–46, but more telling of his influence on South Carolina's and the South's politics are his friendship and correspondence with such other influential figures as Hammond and Virginia's Nathaniel Beverley Tucker.

FROM FREDERICK P. STANTON

Dear Sir

Memphis 4 Sept. 1847

I have just seen a letter from Washington in which it is stated that Judge Adams of Miss. had written you that I had been openly denouncing your appointments.¹ Lest some misunderstanding should arise out of this matter, I take occasion to inform you of the exact tenor of the conversation to which Judge Adams must allude.

I stated that no President had ever been more successful in his measures, or better entitled to the support and approbation of the Country, but that I thought you had not been equally successful in satisfying your friends by your appointments to office. I said, also, that from this cause I believed you had no enthusiastic personal friends in Congress, such as Jackson² used to have. Judge Adams corrected me and said he himself was one, but he believed he was the only one. These were the exact phrases used, and I am very willing you should know them.

You are aware that I have had no favors to ask of you in which I had any personal interest. I have had no reason, therefore, to make any selfish complaints.

I have invariably said on this subject, that I thought you had determined, to act upon higher principles in making your appointments, than mere party services; and that I thought in attempting this, you had pursued a mistaken course, and given many of your friends room to complain.

Your public measures and the whole policy of your Administration, I have defended at all times in public and in private, on the stump and elsewhere, with my best abilities. When your appointments were mentioned in public debate, I have declined the discussion, as not being legitimately involved in my election.

Candor and openness between friends, is the only practicable mode of preserving honest relations. I have written to prevent any possible misunderstanding or misrepresentation, believing you will appreciate my motives and whole conduct.

FRED. P. STANTON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked “(Private)” on the cover.

1. Letter not found. Stephen Adams (1807–57) practiced law in Tennessee and served in the Tennessee Senate, 1833–34, before moving to Aberdeen, Miss., in 1834. He then served as a state circuit court judge, 1837–45, and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1845–47. He again became a Mississippi circuit court judge in 1848; he served in the Mississippi House, 1850, and the U.S. Senate, 1852–57.

2. Andrew Jackson.

TO AARON V. BROWN

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Sept. 8th 1847

You are, I have no doubt much occupied in organizing the two Regiments, for which a requisition has been made on Tennessee.¹ To day I appointed *Dr. Jno. N. Esselman*,² a surgeon & *John Lucien Brown*³ an assistant commissary. *George V. Hebb*⁴ of Lincoln County, who is represented by *Genl. Patterson*,⁵ and the Quarter master *Genl.*⁶ to have been a most valuable officer, has been re-appointed asst. Quarter master. There are already in service from Tennessee, *James Vaughn*⁷ of Monroe County, an asst. Quarter master & *Thomas D. Martin*⁸ (of Nashville I believe) an assistant commissary. These constitute a sufficient staff for the two Regiments, except *one Surgeon & Two assistant surgeons*, and these I will probably not appoint, until I can hear from you. The surgeon

and at least one of the assistant surgeons, should I think be taken from East Tennessee & the Western District, one from each of these sections. I have no one in mine. The other asst. surgeon may come from Middle Tennessee, or from either of the other Divisions of the State, as you may deem best. There is but one person, of whom I have thought, and he is *Dr. Calvin Harvey Walker*⁹ of Columbia, the son of *Simpson Walker*¹⁰ decd. & the nephew of Mr *Nicholson*.¹¹ He possesses much of the talent of his uncle, is very desirous to be an assistant Surgeon, and I have no doubt would if appointed discharge his duty well. Still I will not appoint him, if you think, his residence (in *my town*), or for any other cause, would subject his selection to serious objections. I wish you to nominate suitable persons to me, as soon as you may be prepared to do so. I wrote you a *confidential* letter, about a fortnight ago, in relation to the election of a Senator, and intimated a preference for *Jarnagin* over any other Whig who was likely to be brought forward.¹² Since that time I have recived a letter chiefly on business, from the *Hon. Joseph L. Williams* of *Knoxville*,¹³ from which I venture to give you the following remarkable extract—*viz*

“You will be surprised, as every body here, has been surprised, at the result of the Tennessee elections. This result is to be deplored, especially in its tendency to cripple our Government in its Foreign policy; embolden the Robbers of Mexico, and protract the War. Leading men of our State, exult in the supposed personal mortification of the President, without reflecting or if reflecting not caring, that, that exultation is heard by piratical Mexico, in the spirit of sympathy and alliance. Had simple patriotism united our councils and our efforts to sustain the Government in its duty, Mexico ere this might have been effectually humbled, and our Treasury might now perhaps, under new commercial regulations, be enjoying the benefits of regular trade with that nation. If the designs of the Yankees of the opposition could have been well understood here, the result might have been different in Tennessee.”

The sentiments here expressed are patriotic and I think you will concur with me after reading the extract, that no Whig in the state, could be more acceptable to the Democracy in the senate, than *Mr Williams*. Though decided & firm in his political opinions, he has never been an admirer of certain leading Whigs in the state, and has always been a *personal* friend of mine. If in the senate, he would be fair and manly in his course, and not factious. Since reading his letter, I must say, that I prefer him over any man of his party in the State. He will doubtless have considerable strength among the members of his own party, and if so, my advice is, that the Democratic members of the Legislature should unite upon him & elect him. Next to *Williams* I would prefer *Jarnagin*, for the reasons stated in my last letter, to any other Whig.

Permit me to add, a single other thought. I was twice defeated in the state, and have been twice in the condition you now are. Though mortified as you must be, to have been defeated by a man of such small pretensions as your opponent,¹⁴ yet your course is a plain one, and the one which I pursued. Immediately after my first defeat, I set to work to prepare, a strikly business message to the Legislature, as though I had been reelected.¹⁵ No-one whether politically friedly or not, could have told from my demeanor & bearing that I had been defeated. Upon the day I retired I attended with my successor¹⁶ to the church, in which the ceremony of his Inauguration took place, and made my Valedictory. You will judge whether you will not pursue a similar course. Though defeated, you stand incomparably higher to day, in the estimation of the Democracy of the Union, than you have ever before done. They appreciate your great labours in the cause, and would be ready, should the occasion occur to rally around you with enthusiasm and zeal, for higher honours, which may yet await you.

I have other things to say, but am much occupied, and know, that you must be exceedingly engaged in the performance of your official duties.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked “*Private & Unofficial.*”

1. On the call for troops, see letter and notes in Polk to Brown, August 24, 1847.

2. Nashville physician and, at this point, army surgeon John N. Esselman (c. 1812–1862), a North Carolina native, had included Andrew Jackson among his patients.

3. John Lucian Brown (1800–1884), born in Georgia, moved to Tennessee in 1819. He graduated from the University of North Carolina, in Chapel Hill, and trained for a legal career but never practiced law. After the Mexican War, he participated in the California gold rush.

4. Maryland-born Hebb (1823–?) was a farmer in Lincoln County, Tenn. He served in the Mexican War and, later, as a Democrat in the Tennessee legislature, 1853–55 and 1859–61.

5. Robert Patterson.

6. Born in Virginia and raised in Ohio, Thomas S. Jesup (1788–1860) joined the army in 1808. He commanded several units in the War of 1812 as a captain and major, then in 1818 rose to brigadier general. He served as quartermaster general from 1818 until his death. He commanded the American forces among the Creek Indians, 1836, and in Florida, 1836–38.

7. Tennessee native James Vaughn, appointed captain and assistant quartermaster in the Tennessee volunteers on March 3, 1847, served until October 15, 1848.

8. Martin, of Tennessee, was appointed a captain and assistant commissary of volunteers in the spring of 1847. In September he was ordered to join a Tennessee regiment at Knoxville, apparently the Fifteenth. (A man named Thomas D. Martin [1822?–1847] died in Nashville, apparently by drowning, three months after this letter was written; he, however, seems to be a different person from the captain, who one source claims served until July 1848.)

9. Calvin Harvey Walker (1823–64), a native of Maury County, Tenn., briefly attended the U.S. Military Academy, leaving in 1842. In 1847 he received a medical degree from Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia. By 1861, when the Civil War erupted, he was a prosperous physician and slave-owning farmer in Lynnville, Tenn. He served and died as a Confederate captain.

10. James Simpson Walker (c. 1791–1835), known as Simpson, was a Columbia, Tenn., merchant.

11. Lawyer and Democrat Alfred O. P. Nicholson (1808–76) represented Maury County in the Tennessee House, 1833–37, and Maury and Giles Counties in the Tennessee Senate, 1843–45. He served in the U.S. Senate, 1840–42 (replacing the late Felix Grundy) and 1859–61 (his term ending in his expulsion because of his support of the rebellion by Southern states). After moving to Nashville in 1844, Nicholson edited the Nashville *Union* before becoming president of the Bank of Tennessee, 1846–47. He served as chief justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court, 1870–76. He was James Simpson Walker's brother-in-law.

12. Polk to Brown, August 23, 1847. Reference is to Spencer Jarnagin.

13. Williams to Polk, August 23, 1847.

14. Aaron V. Brown had lost his August 1847 gubernatorial reelection bid narrowly to Neill S. Brown (1810–86), a lawyer who, during the 1830s and 1840s, had helped lead Tennessee's Whig party. A veteran of the Second Seminole War, he served in the state house, 1837–39 and 1855–57. In 1849 he lost his own gubernatorial reelection bid to Democrat William S. Trousdale. In 1850 Pres. Zachary Taylor appointed him minister to Russia, where he served until 1853. Though not related to Aaron, Neill was a native of Giles County, Tenn., Aaron's longtime home.

15. Polk's legislative message of October 7, 1841, has been published in Robert H. White, *Messages of the Governors of Tennessee*, vol. 3, 1835–1845 (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1954), pp. 426–53.

16. James C. "Lean Jimmy" Jones (1809–59), a Wilson County planter, served in the Tennessee House, 1839–41, and as a Whig presidential elector, 1840 and 1848. He defeated Polk for the governorship in both 1841 and 1843, serving 1841–45.

TO ANDREW H. GREEN¹

Sir:

Washington City Sep 9, 1847

Your favor of the 29th May last, informing me of my election as an Honorary Member of the "American Agricultural Association,"² has been in receipt some time, and would have been duly answered, but

for the interference of Public duties. Concurring heartily in the objects of the association, I feel honored in accepting the Membership. Please tender my respects to the association & beleive me,

[JAMES K. POLK]

L, copy, in Washington Curran Whitthorne's hand. DLC-JKP. Addressed to New York City.

1. Green (1820–1903), born in Worcester, Mass., became a New York City merchant and then, for many years, the law partner of Democratic politician Samuel J. Tilden. He was corresponding secretary of the American Agricultural Association. In the 1850s Green began important roles in the administration of New York City's public schools and, especially, the development of its parks.

2. The American Agricultural Association was founded in 1845 to promote the development, collection, and distribution of scientific agricultural knowledge. It maintained offices and held meetings and horticultural exhibitions—including one on September 8–9, 1847—in New York City and published a journal, *The Transactions of the American Agricultural Association*. It appears to have ceased to exist around 1849 and was distinct from another organization founded under the same name in 1879.

FROM ROBERT PATTERSON

My dear Sir

Montgomery [Ala.]¹ 9th Sept 1847

We arrived here last evening all well, and expect to leave this evening on the steam boat "Sunny South"² for Mobile or Halls landing where we take the stage for Pensacola.

I again venture to remind you of my desire to have young Graham of Tazewell³ appointed a Lieutenant in the Army, would greatly prefer the dragoons or the voltigeurs⁴ (in the order mentioned). He has served one year in Mexico as a private volunteer, and on that ground alone is better entitled to a Com[missio]n⁵ than the young dandies who have remained at home.

Your Brother⁶ is cutting in very well. Col Abercrombie⁷ has kindly undertaken to be his Military Mentor, and he could not be in safer or better hands. I will take pleasure in giving him such information and instruction as I think may be required. After the Major found me at Petersburg I availed myself of the first fitting occasion to say to him, that he had now entered a new profession, which required great application, study and circumspection, that his future success as a soldier or statesman would in a great degree depend on his present deportment and exertions, that a large party in and out of the Army would watch with jealous eyes for error of omission or Commission and would Crush him if they had a chance, that another party would "toady" and "boot lick" him to obtain his influence with you, that he ought to be

friendly with all intimate with few, none unless perfectly reliable. I told him I was anxious on his own account, on a/c of Tennessee and on your account, that he should succeed, that I felt under great obligations to you for having appointed me to the highest grade in the Army, a profession to which I had always been devotedly attached, and would like to end my days in it, that this appointment although not unexpected was certainly altogether unsolicited, and therefore the more gratifying to me, that I would be happy to furnish him opportunities for distinction, and would give him such units and such advice and instruction as I thought would be of service to him, but that I could do so only upon one Condition—he asked what that was—I said “that you will consider me as a Father or elder Brother, and that you will always receive whatever I may think fit to say to you, as coming from me in that capacity.” Your Brother promptly replied that he would be glad to do so if I would take the trouble. I am glad therefore to be able to say to you, that the relation established between us, is just what I could desire, and from what I have already discovered of the Mental & Physical energies of your brother, I will be disappointed if he does not do you and himself credit. I will certainly endeavor to produce this result.

Pray remember me most kindly and respectfully to Mrs Polk and to Col & Mrs Walker.⁸

R PATTERSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*Private & Confidential.*”

1. State identified through content analysis.

2. Built in 1847, the *Sunny South* was a 196-ton side-wheel steamer.

3. Robert Patterson’s mother was Ann Graham Patterson. Her family—like Robert and Ann, Irish immigrants to the United States—included Hugh Graham, who eventually established Castle Rock, a lavish estate in Tazewell, Tenn. The reference here is apparently to a younger in-law of Robert, probably Thomas P. Graham (1824–1900s?), Hugh’s Tennessee-born son. Educated at Tusculum College, Tusculum, Tenn., Thomas became a Tazewell farmer and merchant after marrying in 1848. If Robert Patterson, as suggested by his use of “again,” had written earlier to Polk seeking an appointment for Graham, that letter has not been found; he may allude to one of their conversations at the Executive Mansion on August 13 and 30, 1847.

4. Authorized by the Ten Regiment Bill of 1847 and organized that March, the voltigeurs were a regiment armed with rifles instead of the usual smooth-bore muskets. Known formally as the Regiment of Voltigeurs and Foot Riflemen, it was meant to operate with half its men mounted and half on foot. Once deployed, however, commanded by Col. Timothy P. Andrews, the entire regiment functioned as foot riflemen.

5. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

6. William H. Polk.

7. John J. Abercrombie (1802–77), born in Tennessee, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1822 and rose to the permanent rank of major on September 8, 1847. He had earned a brevet promotion to lieutenant colonel for gallantry at Monterrey the previous year. He was an aide-de-camp to Patterson, 1846–47. Abercrombie served until 1864, ending his career as a Union brigadier general.

8. Joseph Knox Walker and Augusta Adams Tabb Walker.

TO JAMES N. SMITH¹

Sir:

Washington City Sep. 9, 1847

The pressure of Public duties has prevented an earlier acknowledgment of the honor conferred on me by the “Philophronian Society”² in my election as an Honorary Member.³ In accepting, permit me to add my testimony to the usefulness of such societies.

Trusting that each Member may avail himself of the privileges and advantages offered therein, and reap the due reward thereof, hereafter,

[JAMES K. POLK]

L, copy, in Washington Curran Whitthorne’s hand. Addressed to Hayesville, Ohio.

1. Smith (1822–82), born in Iberia, Ohio, was a student at the Vermillion Institute and corresponding secretary of its Philophronian Society. Afterwards he was a Presbyterian minister and, drawn to abolitionism, during the mid-1850s moved to Kansas Territory with hopes of using his influence to ensure that it entered the Union as a free state.

2. The Philophronian Society was a literary society—a common type of extracurricular organization at colleges and other educational institutions in the nineteenth century—at the Vermillion Institute, Hayesville, Ohio. Polk, when a student at the University of North Carolina, had belonged to a similar organization, the Dialectic Society. The Vermillion Institute, chartered by the Ohio legislature in 1845 as a coeducational, nondenominational institution of higher education, thrived during the 1850s and later became a high school.

3. Smith to Polk, January 18, 1847.

FROM THOMAS H. BENTON

D. Sir,

Woodford Co. Ken. Sep. 10. 1847

I have had full conversations with Col. Frémont,¹ and am certain that the public interest & the future welfare of California requires that the government should have a full knowledge of every thing that has been done there, and that such knowledge is necessary to enable it

to do justly between individuals, and, what is more, act safely for the future welfare of the province. Without going into particulars I can say that you ought to know things which have happened, & that you can only know them authentically through the court martial on Col. F., or at least, a court of inquiry. Col. F. cannot give you information, while charges hang over him; and besides, he wants every thing judicially brought out. He is a party concerned, and wishes proof alone to decide every thing. Military etiquette will not even allow him to call to pay his respects to you while he is in a state of arrest, and I know of no means except his trial, or a court of inquiry, which can give you the information which you ought to possess, and that with as little delay as possible. I would not write thus if I was not convinced that the public interest, and the future welfare of California, require you to know all that has happened. Col. F. will be urgent for a court martial, or at all events for a court of inquiry, and that not merely on his own account, but for the higher & nobler object of giving information to the government which it ought to possess.

THOMAS H. BENTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked “*Private.*” From Polk’s diary: received September 18, 1847. Published in *EJCF*, pp. 380–81.

1. Under the auspices of the army’s Corps of Topographical Engineers, John C. Frémont (born Fremon) (1813–90), the era’s principal explorer of the American West, led three surveys of the region in the 1840s. His published accounts of the trips and maps produced from them popularized what soon became known as the Oregon Trail and prompted the first mass migration by U.S. citizens into the Far West. In 1846 Frémont’s exploring party, regularized into U.S. soldiers, became involved in the Mexican War and the eventual U.S. conquest of California. As the nominal leader of that conquest, before U.S. civil authority had been firmly established over the former Mexican territory, he became entangled in a rivalry between Cdre. Robert F. Stockton and Col. Stephen W. Kearny over which of those two officers had ultimate authority over California. In September 1846 Stockton appointed Frémont the military governor; he refused to relinquish that post in January 1847 when Kearny, claiming direct authority from Polk, appointed himself to the same post. Forced to return east in July–August 1847, he was informed on August 22 that he was under arrest. He (with wife Jessie Benton Frémont) reached Washington City, as ordered, on September 16. The struggle, which Kearny won, led to Frémont’s court-martial and resignation from the army that winter. In 1856 he became the first presidential nominee of the Republican party but lost the election to Democrat James Buchanan. During the Civil War, he served as a Union general. For more on Frémont and his court-martial, see other letters in this volume and see Tom Chaffin, *Pathfinder: John Charles Frémont and the Course of American Empire* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2002).

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Dear Sir

Near Nashville Sept. 10th 1847

I have to thank you for your two late favors evidently intended to sympathise with me in my late defeat.¹ I thank you for the kindness of the motive whilst I assure you I did not stand in need of any special condolence. I have long known that those who play “at Bowls must expect rubbers.”² I am beaten & *well of it now* & it is useless to speculate about causes. They have been pretty well enumerated in the Union³ & your own views about them are remarkably correct. With the exception of “the Trimble gang”⁴ about Town, no one here exults at it. The Wise ones (Whigs) seem to doubt whether they had not better have lost the State in reference to the contest of the coming year. For every office in the state they have a multitude of applicants, most of whom will become embitterd in the scramble for them. Now in your time this did not make much difference for they would be Whigs still—but it is not so bad now. We shall hold ourselves closely banded together, free in our use of the caucus plan⁵ & be ready to stand off or interfere in their struggles, just as we think best.

I will have my revenge for all the frauds & calumnies they have practised on me & on you & on the country—I will have it, in all the ways, that the good of the state will allow of. Against Topp⁶ for the Senate I will have it—against Reese⁷ for the same I will have it. Even by taking up Jarnagan or C. H. Williams⁸ of the District. The last the most available & I think more reliable. If he had been allowd to run single handed he would have beat Haskeell⁹ for Congress. It was a blunder to have run Gardener,¹⁰ as it was one, not to have let Hall¹¹ run against Barrow¹² by withdrawing Pittman.¹³ I will have my revenge in several other Sections of the State. But more than all will I have it by keeping *fresh* before the people—active & energetic in evry thing & ready to canvass evry county in the state during the next summer if the Presidential contest comes up in any *fightable* form. I am conscious of the ardent feeling of attachment felt by the democracy of the state for my exertions in the late canvass & I will avail myself of it, to annoy the vile & abominable party with which we are contending as long as I live.

How sincerly do I regret the death of Govr Wright.¹⁴ His faults were more those of his friends who surrounded him than his, whilst his virtues & talents were all his own. The Epitaph on the Tomb of Counsellor Mimms, would suit his precisely. “He lived without a blemish, save that one that terminated his existance.” We could have beaten clay¹⁵ with him—perhaps we can with Cass.¹⁶

If your *suspensions* shall prove true we may have to receive a President at the hands of house¹⁷—from *that* calamity however “good Lord deliver us.”¹⁸

The late requisition I think will be met—not with enthusiasm however because the service is *during the War*.¹⁹ If it had been for 12 months we could have raised three times the number.

Letters recd. this evenig (written by your suggestion) makes my way perfectly easy & I thank you for them. Many applications will be made through me to you about Surgeons, Quarter masters & C. I cant well refuse them you know, hardly in any case, but I do not desire them to embarrass you in any case. I must be allowd however to call your attention to a letter I wrote you last summer in favor of my nephew William McCewen of Pontotock Miss. for a Quarter masters or commissare’s appontmnt.²⁰ If you *can* serve him I very much desire it. I repeat in this case too, that I do not expect you to strain a point, beyond what may be satisfactory to you.

Your Brothers²¹ resignation & departure to the Wars, is highly spoken of & approved here.

If a few more companies shall offer (say enough to make a battallion) from different parts of the state (or even a regiment) would they be recd. if organized & presented through me to the government? I think it likely I may be applied to in this way quite often & if affairs should take any unfavorable turn in Mexico, another battallion or regiment—or even a few companies that would be willing to fall in & fill up any broken battallion or regiment elsewhere it might be well enough to train them.

AARON V BROWN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Brown likely refers to Polk to Brown, August 23, 1847, and Polk to Brown, August 24, 1847, although only the former addresses Brown’s defeat. Brown had not yet received Polk to Brown, September 8, 1847, when he wrote this letter.

2. This proverb, which observes the inevitability of adversity by reference to a set (or rubber) of ball games, dates to the eighteenth century.

3. Reference is to the Nashville *Union* or the Washington *Union*, likely the former. The Nashville *Union* (and that daily’s weekly counterpart, named in 1847 the *National Union*) had been edited by Elbridge G. Eastman since 1846. Polk had helped establish that Democratic newspaper in 1835.

4. Brown probably refers to Nashville lawyer and politician John Trimble (1812–84) and his allies. A Whig, Trimble served as state attorney general for the Nashville district, 1836–41; in the Tennessee House, 1843–45; and in the Tennessee Senate, 1845–47, 1859–61, and 1865–67. He later served in the U.S. House, 1867–69.

5. Under this system, a party's legislators met in a nominating caucus to decide whom they all would support in the election of a U.S. senator or other officer. Caucuses of party leaders also often chose the party's candidate in a popular election.

6. Tennessee-born lawyer, politician, developer, and financier Robertson Topp (1807–76) began his law practice in Columbia, then relocated to Memphis. He served as a Whig in the state house, 1835–39, and established the Gayoso House hotel in Memphis in 1843. During the late 1840s, Topp developed the area that, in 1846, became the municipality of South Memphis; during that decade he also developed Memphis's Beale Street.

7. Tennessee-born lawyer and jurist William B. Reese (1793–1859)—not to be confused with his son of the same name, who was also a judge—was the first chief justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court, 1835–47. He also served as president of East Tennessee University (now the University of Tennessee), Knoxville, 1850–53.

8. Spencer Jarnagin and Christopher H. "Kit" Williams. Williams (1798–1857), a North Carolina native, was admitted to the bar around 1820. He became a Lexington, Tenn., lawyer and represented a Tennessee district as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1837–43 and 1849–53.

9. William T. Haskell (1818–59), a lawyer, Whig, and veteran of the Second Seminole War, served in the Tennessee House, 1841–43; as colonel of the Second Tennessee Infantry Regiment in the Mexican War, 1846–47; and in the U.S. House, 1847–49.

10. John A. Gardner (1809–92) edited the *Paris West Tennessean*, 1827–28, before becoming a lawyer in Dresden. A Democrat, he served in the Tennessee Senate, 1841–47, and House, 1879–81. Defeated for a U.S. House seat by Haskell in 1847, he served as a presidential elector in 1848.

11. Brown likely refers to William Hall (1775–1856), a North Carolina-born Democrat who became a Sumner County, Tenn., farmer and militia general. He served in the Tennessee House, 1797–1805; in the Tennessee Senate, 1821–29 (as Speaker, 1827–29); as governor, upon Sam Houston's resignation, 1829; and in the U.S. House, 1831–33.

12. A lawyer from Tennessee and briefly a resident of Mississippi, George Washington Barrow (1807–66) was born into one wealthy Tennessee family and married into another. He served as a soldier and then an officer in the Second Seminole War; was chargé d'affaires to Portugal, 1841–44; edited the *Nashville Republican Banner*, 1845–47; and won election to the U.S. House as a Whig, 1847–49. In the House he befriended Abraham Lincoln. (Earlier volumes of this series identify Barrow as Washington Barrow.)

13. Barrow's opponent in 1847 was John B. Pittman (c. 1806–1860s?), a Tennessee native who, in 1860, practiced law in Nashville.

14. Lawyer, soldier, and politician Silas Wright, Jr., (1795–1847) who had died two weeks earlier, on August 27, had been a leading member of the Albany Regency, a cabal of Democratic leaders who controlled New York state politics from the early 1820s into the late 1830s. Wright was a state senator, 1824–27; a member of the U.S. House, 1827–29; state comptroller, 1829–33; a member

of the U.S. Senate, 1833–44; and governor, 1844–46. In 1844 he declined the Democratic nomination for vice president on the ticket headed by Polk.

15. Henry Clay.

16. Democrat and lawyer Lewis Cass (1782–1866), a New Hampshire native, served in the Ohio House, 1806; in the army, 1813–14; as governor of Michigan Territory, 1813–31; as secretary of war under President Jackson, 1831–36; as minister to France, 1836–42; as U.S. senator from Michigan, 1845–48 and 1849–57; and as secretary of state under President Buchanan, 1857–60. He was the Democratic nominee for president in 1848 but lost to Whig Zachary Taylor.

17. On the U.S. House's choosing the president, see letter and notes in Polk to Brown, August 23, 1847.

18. Brown probably quotes the Litany in the Book of Common Prayer, 1662 revision, throughout which this line appears.

19. On this call for troops, see letter and notes in Polk to Brown, August 24, 1847.

20. Brown to Polk, May 9, 1847 (calendared letter). Brown's nephew, whose name Brown spells "Wm. McEwen" in that letter, was the son of David K. McEwen, of Pontotoc, Miss., and Brown's late sister Penelope Brown McEwen. He may have been the William McEwen who was appointed a commissioner by the Mississippi legislature to establish the Hernando Rail Road and Banking Company in 1837 and the one who was involved in debt litigation in Marshall County, Miss., in 1840 and 1841. Polk did not give him an appointment.

21. William H. Polk.

FROM JOSEPH HALL¹

Philadelphia Sept. 10h/47

Sir

Anniversary of Perrys Victory at Lake Erie²

Enclosed is a poticion against James Page Collector of the Port of Philadelphia.³ Page has received more public money than any man in the U.S. and the State of Pennsylvania has been beaten three times in the last Eleven years.⁴ Page held office all three of the times when he was in the Post Office two and last year he was Collector and the State dont like him. If he could be removed and Judge Eldred⁵ appointed in his place my word for it the State would go for the democrats this fall and if not old Pennsylvania will go wig and Mr James K Polk you have this in your power and if it is not done you have no body to blame but yourself. If you Recolect I told you that Henry Horne⁶ would be rejected and I now tell you this and it will be so. Page has his Brotherinlaw⁷ which held office on Harrison and Tyler⁸ and for the last Twenty years and his Brother⁹ and all of his family. There saleries amounted to from—Ten to Twenty thousand dollars per annum. Thomas Stewart¹⁰ has been in office for the last Thirty or Thirty five years with anumber of others that would not give one cent to the election and Stewart when I called on him

for his money said he would not give one cent and he had two Sons in New York that he told them not to go to the Electon and in further conversation with Stewart he told me that he was opposed to the Foreigners and likewise opposed to Freemasonry and all sutch Societies and as I understand that you are a royal arch mason¹¹ I hope you will attend to all sutch men as Stewart and Stewart is not fit for the office he holds. Besides that he did not leave Pittsburg for building Churches.

JOS. HALL

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Philadelphia Democrat Hall—not to be confused with Boston navy agent Joseph Hall—in 1840 was charged with attempting to kill a member of a Whig procession in Northern Liberties, Penn.; in 1842 was appointed by the governor an inspector of distilled domestic spirits for the port of Philadelphia; and in 1843 ran unsuccessfully for the office of assistant assessor of Philadelphia's High Street Ward.

2. On September 10, 1813, in the Battle of Lake Erie, a key naval battle of the War of 1812, nine U.S. vessels commanded by Cdre. Oliver Hazard Perry captured six British warships. Perry (1785–1819), a brother of Matthew C. Perry, was born in Rhode Island and joined the navy in 1799. He served in the War with Tripoli and won fame in the War of 1812, particularly for his victory at Lake Erie. He died of yellow fever in Trinidad.

3. Hall et al. to Polk, c. September 10, 1847. Philadelphia-born attorney James Page (1795–1875)—whose surname, honoring his military service in the War of 1812, was generally prefixed with the title Colonel—exercised, during much of his professional life, great influence in Pennsylvania's Democratic party. He also held local and federal public offices, including as postmaster at Philadelphia, 1842–44; Philadelphia County treasurer, 1842–44; and customs collector at Philadelphia, 1846–49.

4. Hall does not describe presidential or gubernatorial elections. He probably refers to Democrats' failure to win a majority of Pennsylvania's U.S. House seats in the Congresses beginning in 1843, 1845, and 1847.

5. Attorney and jurist Nathaniel Bailey Eldred (1795–1867), born in Orange County, moved to Milford, Penn., about 1811 and opened a law practice there after joining the bar in 1817. He was elected to the Pennsylvania legislature in 1822 and served intermittently in that body during much of that decade. For two decades beginning in 1835, he served as a Pennsylvania district court judge. In 1844 he was a presidential elector for Polk.

6. Henry Horn. Letter not found.

7. Pennsylvania native Charles F. Breuil (1805?–1847), apparently the husband of a sister of James Page, was appraiser for the port of Philadelphia, 1842–48. In 1846 he became an inspector of the Philadelphia County Prison, also known as Moyamensing Prison. He died in late November 1847.

8. William Henry Harrison and John Tyler. Tyler had appointed Breuil to his appraisership.

9. George W. Page (1800–1875) partnered with Samuel C. Rogers to open a clothing store, Rogers & Page, in his native Philadelphia in 1826. In the late 1830s he was a director of the Central Savings Association of Philadelphia and of that city's Western Bank. In 1846, with his brother as customs collector, he was appointed cashier in the Philadelphia Customs House; by late 1847 he had become a clerk in James Page's office.

10. In 1818, the year the post of appraiser was established by Congress to assess the value of and determine duties on imports entering each of the nation's ports, Pres. James Monroe nominated Irish immigrant Stewart (c. 1779–1860) as the first appraiser for the port of Philadelphia. Stewart—intermittently, subject to the vagaries of partisan political patronage—occupied that post or the post of assistant appraiser (which he held during Breuil's tenure as appraiser) until 1849, when he was replaced by an appointee of Whig president Zachary Taylor.

11. The Freemasons, or Masons, have been a popular fraternal order in America since the eighteenth century. Polk was initiated into the order, Lodge 31, in Columbia, Tenn., in 1820. He apparently remained active in the order until his 1825 election to Congress. Two years later, in the wake of the disappearance and presumed murder of an activist who had planned to publish a revealing book on the secretive organization, the Anti-Masonic party was organized. With its base in the Northern states and among lawyers, bankers, and other professionals regarded as elite, the party soon became a focus for anti-Jacksonian agitation. The Anti-Masonic party never won significant electoral victories but did hold conventions and run candidates for public office. By the late 1830s, the party's never-broad popularity was waning and most of its members drifted into the Whigs.

TO JAMES H. WALKER¹

Dear Sir:

Washington City Sept. 10th 1847

Having learned from your brother² that you desired an appointment in *the line of the army*, and that you would prefer it to the office of Assistant Quarter master, which you now hold, I have appointed you, a Captain of the Regiment of Voltigeurs, under the command of *Col. Andrews*,³ who is now serving in the column of the army under the immediate command of *Genl. Scott* in Mexico. After your laborious service in Mexico in the staff of the Quarter master's Department, I thought [. . .]⁴ it proper to transfer you to the *line* with the same rank, which you now hold. In the *line* you may have an opportunity to distinguish yourself, and on that account, I suppose you desired the change. You should [. . .] immediately notify the adjt. Genl. for the [Army]⁵ at Washington, of your acceptance, [and having] taken the oath prescribed, forward it to the Adjt. Genl. When you were appointed Asst. Quarter master in the summer of 1846, your residence was understood to be in

Arkansas, and you are recorded as having been appointed from that state. You were recommended by *Mr Sevier & Col. Yell*.⁶ In transferring you to the appointment of Captain in the *line*, you [have] been appointed from Arkansas, and in responding to the interrogatory as to your age, the state where born, and the state from which appointed, you will of course answer that you were born in Tennessee and have been appointed from Arkansas.

I send you a Printed copy of *General Order* No. 19. of April 28th 1847, that you may have a list of the officers who compose your Regiment, and also *General Order* No. 22. of May 29th 1847, by which you were retained in service as assistant Quarter master, with the rank of Captain.⁷

I desire you to accept the appointment, now conferred upon you, and proceed without delay to *Vera Cruz* to join your Regiment. The letter of the Secretary of War, informing you of your appointment,⁸ will entitle you to the command of your company on reaching your Regiment. As soon as your letter of acceptance is received, a regular commission will be forwarded to you to Mexico. *Majr. Genl. Patterson*⁹ and staff, and *Majr. Wm. H. Polk* of the 3rd Dragoons left here a week ago, on their way to *Vera Cruz*. *Genl. Patterson* will command a large force probably not less than 3.000. troops from *Vera Cruz* to *Genl. Scott's* Head Quarters, and if you set out immediately you can reach *Vera Cruz*, before the troops & train under *Genl. Patterson* will leave that place.¹⁰ In order to avoid the danger from the Yellow fever at New Orleans, I advise you, to proceed directly down the River past that City, and take a vessel at the *Balize*.¹¹

Enclose your answer to the adjt. Genl. of the Army, to me, and I will cause it to take the proper direction. I write you this *private* letter for your guidance. Your brother is absent in New York or he would have written to you.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Col. Andrews's Regiment belongs to *Genl. Cadwallader's* Brigade & to *Majr. Genl. Pillow's* Division.¹² J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn., and marked "(Private)."

1. James H. Walker (1816–1902) was a son of James Walker and Jane Maria Polk Walker, the president's sister. Born in Columbia, Tenn., he was a member of the class of 1838 at Yale College and afterwards a resident of Arkansas. He served as captain and assistant quartermaster in the Arkansas Mounted Rifle Regiment from August 1846 until Polk appointed him to the voltigeurs, as

discussed in this letter. Mustered out in August 1848, he later lived in Corinth, Miss.

2. James H. Walker had four living brothers, but Polk probably refers here and below to Joseph Knox Walker.

3. A native of Ireland and a veteran of the War of 1812, Timothy P. Andrews (1794–1868) served as army paymaster, 1822–47. After being promoted to colonel on February 16, 1847, he commanded the regiment of voltigeurs in Mexico. During that command he distinguished himself at the Battles of Molino del Rey and Chapultepec, for the latter of which he was brevetted brigadier general. At the close of the war, he was reinstated as a paymaster.

4. Word or words here and below illegible or uncertain, light or blurred ink transfer.

5. A native of Virginia, Roger Jones (1788–1852) served as adjutant general of the army from 1825 until his death.

6. Ambrose H. Sevier and Archibald Yell. A Tennessee-born lawyer and Democrat, Sevier (1801–48) served in the Arkansas territorial house, 1823–27, and as territorial delegate to the U.S. House, 1828–36. After statehood he served in the U.S. Senate, 1836–48; he chaired the Committee on Indian Affairs, 1839–41 and 1845–47, and served as president *pro tempore*, 1845–47. In March 1848 Polk appointed him a commissioner to bring the amended Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Mexico. He died in Arkansas that December. Polk's friend Yell (1797–1847) practiced law in Fayetteville, Tenn., before serving as U.S. judge for Arkansas Territory, 1832–35; as U.S. representative from the state of Arkansas, 1836–39; as Arkansas governor, 1840–44; and again as U.S. representative, 1845–46. A Democrat, he resigned from Congress to command a volunteer regiment from Arkansas in the Mexican War. He died in the Battle of Buena Vista on February 23, 1847.

7. Enclosures not found. General Orders, No. 19, directed the organization of and assigned officers to the regiments raised under the Ten Regiment Bill. PDS. No. 22 identified those volunteer quartermasters, assistant quartermasters, commissaries, assistant commissaries, surgeons, and assistant surgeons who would remain in the army after the discharge of most twelve-month volunteers in June 1847. D. DNA–RG 94.

8. Enclosed letter from William L. Marcy to Walker not found.

9. Robert Patterson.

10. "Train" refers here to a horse-drawn retinue of wagons bearing troops and supplies, not a railway. Headquarters reached Mexico City in September.

11. New Orleans suffered an epidemic of yellow fever from July to December 1847, with most deaths occurring between August and October. Polk thus advises Walker to go to The Balize, La., near the mouth of the Mississippi River. That town was abandoned in the 1860s after a series of hurricanes.

12. George Cadwalader and Gideon J. Pillow. Cadwalader (1806–79), a Philadelphia lawyer and militia officer, suppressed a series of riots in Philadelphia in 1844 that pitted Irish Americans against supporters of the American party. He was appointed a brigadier general in the army on March 3, 1847, and brevetted major general effective September 13 for gallantry at the

Battle of Chapultepec. Discharged in 1848, he served again as a Union general during the Civil War. Polk's friend Pillow (1806–78) had known the president since both were lawyers in Columbia, Tenn. Pillow never held public office, but served Polk as a political advisor and surrogate and, in 1844, played a key role in securing Polk's presidential nomination as a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. He joined the U.S. war effort in Mexico upon receiving a commission as brigadier general in July 1846. Polk promoted him to major general the following April. During the Civil War, he served as a Confederate general.

FROM WILLIAM O. BUTLER

My Dear Sir

Carrollton Ky Sept 11th 1847

I had the honor to receive your letter of the 30th ult, last night on my return from the Drennon springs,¹ to which I have made a second visit, and feel so much improved as to render it almost certain that I will be able to return to Mexico with the troops now in process of being raised. I have anticipated the orders of the Secretary of War² and spent the day in writing to all the field officers of the new regiments, of whose appointments I have been informed; merely however with the view to excelerate the raising of the troops.

I am much gratified to learn from New-Orleans papers that the Train for the fate of which you expressed some uneasiness, is going on well. We also learn from the same source that Genl Scott is before the City of Mexico, and that some negotiations are likely to ensue.³ This however is so unauthentic as to make but little impression. God grant it may prove true.

My Main object in writing is to recommend some two or three persons for appointments, provided there is to be any addition to the Quartermasters and Commissaries now in the field.

At the head of these I without hesitation place the name of Maj John B Shepherd.⁴ He was the Maj of the Louisville Legion on the late campaign in Mexico, and for much of the time in command of it. I found him on all occasions, one of the most zealous, active, and skillful officers of his grade in the army; so much so that I recommended him to Governor Owsley⁵ as one of the field officers of the new Regiments; but without success. Convinced that no man of my acquaintance will perform the duties with more zeal and fidelity I take pleasure in recommending him for the appointment of a Maj in the Quartermaster, or Commissary Depart.

I Also take the liberty to recommend Mr Lewis M Reese⁶ for an appointment in one of these departments with the rank of captain. I do not profess to know Mr Reese intimately. I only know his reputation in

the late campaign was a good one. I enclose you a letter from my particular friend Col Wallace, asking me to present his claims.⁷

W O BUTLER

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. This Kentucky resort was built around springs whose waters allegedly possessed restorative powers.

2. William L. Marcy.

3. After U.S. victories near Contreras and at Churubusco, August 19–20, 1847, Winfield Scott assigned Gens. Franklin Pierce, John A. Quitman, and Persifor F. Smith to negotiate an armistice with Mexican generals at Tacubaya, near Mexico City. Signed on August 23 and effective the next day, it forbade further military preparations and facilitated the opening of peace negotiations between Nicholas P. Trist and Mexican commissioners. On September 6, however—after Mexicans attacked U.S. sutlers trying to obtain provisions in the capital, Mexican troops constructed new fortifications, and negotiators failed to find common ground—Scott ended the armistice. Polk learned of it on September 14 and, according to his diary entry of the next day, believed that Scott instead should have demanded Mexican acceptance of U.S. peace terms and taken Mexico City if rebuffed.

4. Shepherd served in the army as a second lieutenant of infantry, 1838–39, and as major of the First Kentucky Infantry Regiment, May 1846–May 1847. He did not rejoin the army.

5. Born in Virginia and raised in Kentucky, William Owsley (1782–1862) was admitted to the bar and served in the state house, 1809–11. He sat on the state's Court of Appeals, 1812–28; in the state senate, 1832–34; and as Kentucky secretary of state, 1834–36. A Whig, he defeated Butler to become Kentucky governor, 1844–48.

6. Kentucky native Reese (c. 1819–1860s?) served in the Second Kentucky Infantry Regiment, 1846–47, first as a private and then as a second lieutenant. According to the enclosed letter, Reese “distinguished himself by his conduct in the battle of Buena Vista.” He did not, however, receive a new appointment from Polk. In 1860 he was a constable in West Covington, Ky.

7. Robert Wallace to Butler, September 6, 1847. ALS. DLC—JKP. A native of Delaware and a former resident of Ohio, Wallace (1789–1863) became a farmer and slaveholder on his estate of Longwood, near Covington, Ky.

FROM JOHN McKEON ET AL.¹

Dear Sir,

New York Sepr 11th 1847

The *United Irish Repeal Association*² and the several *Charitable and Benevolent Societies* of this City, favorable to the Civil Emancipation of Ireland, have made preparations for celebrating the obsequies of *Daniel O'Connell*,³ on the 22nd instant.

A solemn procession will be formed upon the occasion and a Eulogy will be pronounced by the Hon. *William H. Seward*⁴ at Castle-Garden.⁵

On behalf of the Committee of Arrangements we respectfully invite you to participate in the solemnities.

JOHN MCKEON

L. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne’s AE: received September 15, 1847.

1. Letter and eight signatures written in an unknown hand. McKeon (1808–83), born in Albany, N.Y., to Irish immigrants, became a New York City lawyer. He served in the state legislature, 1832–34; as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1835–37 and 1841–43; and as New York County district attorney, 1846–50.

2. Led by Daniel O’Connell since the 1830s and institutionally based in the Loyal National Repeal Association, which he founded in 1840, Ireland’s “Repeal” movement sought to repeal the Act of Union of 1800 and to reinstate the Irish Parliament, which that act had abolished. The movement thus sought greater Irish autonomy but, unlike the island’s more extreme nationalists, did not seek to dissolve Ireland’s connection with the United Kingdom. Supporters in the United States founded various organizations over the following years, including, by 1843, New York City’s United Irish Repeal Association. It continued until at least 1848. On July 27, 1847, it and other organizations met in Tammany Hall to begin planning their celebration of O’Connell and to appoint the committee of arrangements.

3. Born to a County Kerry family that had lost most of its land due to its Catholicism, O’Connell (1775–1847) studied in France and became a prominent lawyer back in Ireland. He founded the Catholic Association, dedicated to expanding the rights and improving the lives of his coreligionists, in 1823. He was elected to the House of Commons but, as a Catholic, was unable to take his seat in 1828; the next year Parliament passed the Catholic Relief Act, abolishing that barrier, and he was reelected. In Parliament he became a champion for the Irish, for Jews, and for black slaves. He served several months in prison in 1844 for planning, though canceling, a large Repeal rally in Clontarf the previous year. He died in Genoa, in the Kingdom of Sardinia, on May 15, 1847, while traveling through Europe.

4. Seward (1801–72), an Auburn, N.Y., lawyer, served in the New York Senate, 1830–34; as governor, 1839–43; and, first as a Whig and then as a Republican, in the U.S. Senate, 1849–61. After unsuccessfully seeking the Republican presidential nomination in 1860, he served as secretary of state under Presidents Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson, 1861–69. George W. Bungay, in *Off-Hand Takings; or, Crayon Sketches of the Noticeable Men of Our Age* (New York: De Witt & Davenport, 1854), p. 52, describes him as “the Daniel O’Connell of America.”

5. Built in 1808–11 as a fortress, Manhattan’s Castle Garden—now known as Castle Clinton—became a public event space in 1824. In 1855 it became New York’s immigration center. Polk visited and briefly spoke there on June 25, 1847, during his tour of the North.

FROM HOPKINS L. TURNEY¹

Dear Sir

Winchester [Tenn.]² Sept the 12th 1847

I am just recovering from a sevier spell of congestive fever, and altho yet quite feeble I am able to attend to some matters of interest. You have doubtless received the painfull news of our entire defeat in this state and it would be quite useless for me now to speculate as to the causes that produced it, it is enough to say the whigs cannot do it again.

You I presume are prepared to give up all in Tennessee, do not despair. I am strongly inclined to believe that we will elect a Senator who is for the War, out and out, opposed to a Bank in favour of the present Tariff³ and in fact who agrees with us on every principle in issue between the two parties. His name is James A. Whiteside.⁴ He intends to be a Democrat. He voted for A V. Brown, and for the Democratic candidate for Congress.⁵ If we succeed in this as I believe we will, unless we are defeated by A. O. P. Nich,⁶ we will thereby secure a Majority in the Senate and will consequently be able to defeat any attempt to instruct our Senators &c. Besides it will Revolutionise some two or three whig counties. If I were able to write you a Long letter and give you all the facts and circumstances for the above opinion I think you would concur with me, but at present I cannot. How can we get Nicholson to unite with us in this matter. I fear if you were to write him He would use it against us. You know my opinion of the man. He I think is secretly your enemy. He thinks you treat me with too much Respect. Could you not get Johnson to write to Gove. Brown,⁷ manage this matter if you can.

I would be much pleased to Learn if there are any prospects of peace. If you can find Leasure from your arduous public duties, please drop me a line.

H. L. TURNEY

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “(Confidential).” From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received September 27, 1847; “*Private*.”

1. Turney (1797–1857) was a lawyer in Jasper and, by 1829, Winchester, Tenn. He served in the Tennessee House, 1825–31 and 1835–37, and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1837–43, and Senate, 1845–51.

2. State identified from postmark.

3. Walker Tariff.

4. Kentucky native James A. Whiteside (1803–61) moved as a child to Pikeville, Tenn. Admitted to the bar in 1824, he moved in 1838 to the fledgling settlement of Ross’s Landing—soon renamed Chattanooga—where he acquired land, practiced law, became a banker, and oversaw the construction of railroads and turnpikes. A Whig, he served in the Tennessee House, 1835–37 and 1845–49, and Senate, 1837–39. His advocacy for Chattanooga is credited with

the decision in the early 1840s to make that city, rather than nearby Harrison, the northern terminus of the Western and Atlantic Railroad, which connected Georgia (ultimately Atlanta) through East Tennessee to Western cities and agriculture. His activities, particularly his role in securing the railroad, are widely viewed as laying the foundation for Chattanooga's emergence as a major city of business and industry. No record located by this series' editors supports Turney's assertion that Whiteside ever considered becoming a Democrat.

5. Aaron V. Brown and Samuel S. Smith. Smith (1802–51), of Giles County, was defeated in 1847 by Whig John H. Crozier for the U.S. House seat from Tennessee's Third Congressional District, which included Chattanooga.

6. Reference is to Alfred O. P. Nicholson, though he had not served in the Tennessee Senate since 1845.

7. Andrew Johnson and Aaron V. Brown.

FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear sir

Columbia Ten. Sept. 14t 1847

I received yours of the 2nd Inst. & will hand over Mr E Young's two notes to Mr V K. Stevenson¹ on sight and take his receipt for them according to your directions when I can go to Nashville or see Mr Stevenson. I can not tell when I will go as my wife² is still in a verry helpless situation & I have my old disease on me.

Situated as I am it will be out of my power to attend to your business any longer. As to Harry³ I informed him that he was to go on the farm the next year (I understand from Mr Jno. Hammons⁴ that he is Married to an other wife⁵) and that he might prepare himself.

I have imployed Mr. Mairs⁶ for the next year at \$500. I received a letter a few days ago from him. Every thing was going on well & a fair prospect for a crop. The boy Jo⁷ that I took down last ran off the 20th of July last & has not been heard off since. He only 17 years old (but large). I can-not he will stay out long. Enclosed you will find the Mairs letter,⁸ which will give you all the particulars.

It is almost imposible to sell Town property here at this time as we are all sued for our town property. Mr Jas H. Thomas & S D Frierson have gone to Nashville this weak for the purpose of trying the case between Mrs Polly Weatherhead & the Citizens of this place.⁹ If I can meet with any chance to sell your store house I will do so. It ought to sell for the price that you autherised me to take for it.¹⁰

ROBT CAMPBELL JR

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Washington Curran Whitthorne's AE: received September 22, 1847; "on private business." From Polk's AE: answered November 24, 1847.

1. Evan Young and Vernon K. Stevenson.
2. Elizabeth Polk Campbell (1796–1856), probably born in the Greenbrier District of western Virginia, was a second cousin of both Polk and her husband, Robert Campbell, Jr.
3. Long Harry.
4. John E. Hammons (c. 1802–1850s?) was a Kentucky-born farmer in Carrollton, Miss. Polk hired out Harry to him in 1845, possibly into 1846, and probably first in 1840. Harry's first wife, whose name has not been found, was owned either by Hammons or by a nearby farmer until her death in late 1845.
5. Harry's second wife (c. 1805–?), whose name has not been found, had been owned by John D. Carroll, of Carrollton, for whom she cooked, washed, and ironed, since about 1828. Carroll informed Polk, in a letter of September 20, 1848, that she had children aged four and six. He offered to sell all three to Polk but the president apparently did not purchase them. ALS. DLC–JKP.
6. John A. Mairs.
7. Jo, or Joe, (c. 1829–?) brought to Polk's Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation from Tennessee, fled twice in 1847 and three times in the first half of 1848. On June 17, 1848, Polk asked John T. Leigh to sell him, but Joe nonetheless remained on the plantation until after Polk's death. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.
8. In the enclosed letter of August 21, Mairs informs Robert Campbell, Jr., that Joe escaped on July 28 (not July 20) "with out any provocation atall" and that Mairs suspects that he is heading for Tennessee. Mairs notes that, in his letter of August 21 to Polk, he did not mention the escape. ALS. DLC–JKP.
9. James H. Thomas, Samuel D. Frierson, and Polly Bledsoe Weatherhead. Born in South Carolina, Columbia lawyer Frierson (1803–66) was once Marshall T. Polk's law partner. By 1844 he had become a political opponent of James K. Polk. In 1854 he was appointed a chancery court judge. Weatherhead, a widow in Mississippi and a daughter of Tennessee pioneer Anthony Bledsoe (1733–88), claimed a right to hundreds of acres of her father's property under his will. Pursuant to those claims, in October 1846 she filed a federal suit, seeking to eject twenty-two rival claimants from those properties. Bledsoe's land had included the town of Columbia. Although Weatherhead's suit did not name Polk as a defendant, he noted in his letter to Thomas of January 1, 1847, that the property in dispute included his. He was concerned that her legal actions might intrude upon his efforts to sell his home in Columbia. (Volume 11 of this series erroneously identifies Weatherhead as Milly Weathered Bledsoe and Anthony Bledsoe as her father-in-law.)
10. Letter, if any, not found.

FROM AARON V. BROWN

Dear Sir

Nashville Sept. 17" 1847

I was aware of the sentiments of Jo. Williams¹ & we all here prefer him to any other whig, but we fear he has not whig strength enough to start with. His party knows his Democratic, Polk, Brown proclivities &

will hardly rally enough. If they will, he will be your Senator. Jarnagan's letter you will have seen & he is out of the question with *both parties*.² Kit Williams³ (in an confidential correspondence) with Joseph Williams & if either can get whig strength enough either will do. But our notion now is to wait & aggravate the parties—E & West Tennessee—both will claim it & it is possible, that the whigs of Western district will *resolve* to vote even for a *Democrat* from *Western District*, than for a whig *out of it*. They say so now vehemently. If so Dunlap⁴ or Wm T. Brown⁵ might come it.⁶ But I do not predicate much hope *on this point*. The Democrats must not be at fault on the Geographical claim of the two ends, if it can be avoided. They must Scatter about indifferently between them or throw their whole strength on some Democrat sometimes, on one end & sometimes on the other—finally if forced to vote they must elect some whig least objectionable to them. I shall mingle freely with the assembly many caucus often with the Democrats—keep them united & skilful in their action so as to controal events when we can, & profit by them when we cannot.

I continue in the fight without mortification at the past & with no special care about the future. You would be amazed see how little exultation is manifested here on account of the late victory⁷ & the Whig population of Nashville is evidently kind & friendly towards me. So it is all over the State. The only lie they told upon me in relation to my refusal to let the volunteers camp on my grounds will soon exposed in a way that will overwhelm the scoundrel who invented it.

I am preparing a business message & will be wanting in no becoming gracefulness in surrendering my position to a worthless but successful rival.⁸

The Requisition is all going on very well & suitable *officers & fiends*⁹ at all the proper points.¹⁰

The glorious news from Mexico is upon us & 100 cannon sounded it throught the neighborhood this morning at Sunrise.¹¹ If Pillow have¹² himself through the occasion as his friends expect—the tongue of calumny will be forever silenced & he can retire with pride & satisfaction.¹³ We have no particulars yet by which to judge on this point.

I write you in great haste but desire to be kindly rememberd by Mrs. P.

AARON V BROWN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "*confidential*." From Polk's AE: received September 25, 1847.

1. Joseph L. Williams. Brown refers here to Polk to Aaron V. Brown, September 8, 1847.

2. Spencer Jarnagin's letter, dated August 31, 1847, appeared in the *Nashville Republican Banner* on September 13. It discusses his 1846 vote in the U.S. Senate for the Walker Tariff, despite his own opposition, because of instructions from the Tennessee legislature. Acknowledging that the legislature's Whig majority may oppose his reappointment to the Senate and alluding to Democrats' interest in selecting him from among available Whigs, he writes, "if I cannot be elected by my own party, I will not be by any other."

3. Christopher H. "Kit" Williams.

4. Brown probably refers to either James T. Dunlap or, more likely, William C. Dunlap. Both these Knoxville-born brothers had become West Tennessee Democrats. James (1812–79) was a Paris, Tenn., lawyer. He served in the state house, 1847–49, and senate, 1851–55. William (1798–1872) became a Knoxville lawyer and merchant in 1819, then moved to Bolivar in 1828. A military veteran, he served in the U.S. House, 1833–37, and as a state circuit court judge, 1840–49. Afterwards he moved to Memphis. William ran unsuccessfully for the U.S. Senate in 1845; he later served in the state senate, 1851–55 and 1861–63, and house, 1857–59.

5. William T. Brown (?–after 1859), a West Tennessee Democrat, served as U.S. attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, 1835–36, and a Nashville-based state circuit court judge, 1836–38.

6. In a dialectical and colloquial usage, "come it" indicates achieving something.

7. Brown refers to Neill S. Brown's gubernatorial victory over him.

8. Aaron V. Brown submitted his legislative message on October 6, 1847. Besides state and regional matters, he discussed Tennessee's raising and funding troops for the Mexican War; he praised the state's men for volunteering in large numbers, both at the start of the war and recently, and praised the enlisted soldiers for their outstanding service. He expressed hope that a treaty soon would end the war, which he blamed Mexico for beginning, and that the United States would acquire Mexican land to cover its war expenses and Mexico's debts to Americans. He urged legislators to instruct Tennessee's congressional representatives to vote for a treaty and related appropriations even if they opposed any territorial acquisitions in that treaty. Supporting the extension of the Missouri Compromise line to the Pacific Ocean and discounting the danger of the slavery issue, he asserted, "The pretext that any new accession of territory, may endanger the perpetuation of our glorious Union, is only a shallow device for alarming the timid and deceiving the ignorant." Robert H. White, *Messages of the Governors of Tennessee*, vol. 4, 1845–1857 (Nashville: Tennessee Historical Commission, 1957), pp. 147–70.

9. Brown may have meant to write "friends."

10. Brown refers to the Fourth and Fifth Tennessee Infantry Regiments; on the call for troops that included them, see letter and notes in Polk to Aaron V. Brown, August 24, 1847.

11. Brown refers to the Battles of Contreras and Churubusco and the Armistice of Tacubaya, details of which reached Nashville early on September 17, 1847. Both battles were fought near Mexico City as Gen.

Winfield Scott's forces approached the capital from the south. The first began on August 19 when Gen. Gideon J. Pillow, whose troops were building a road across the Pedregal lava field, attacked Mexican forces commanded by Gen. Gabriel Valencia and stationed near the Padierna farm, near the village of Contreras. The next day Gen. Persifor F. Smith led a larger—and successful—assault on the Mexicans, who retreated to Churubusco, four miles from Mexico City, and made defensive use of a convent. In another, hard-fought battle the same day, Scott's forces defeated General Santa Anna's at Churubusco, enabling the Americans' continued progress toward the capital. Brown was aware that the Armistice of Tacubaya had been signed on August 23, but not that Scott had ended it on September 6.

12. In a now-obsolete usage, "have" meant "behave."

13. On the charges against Gideon J. Pillow that led to courts of inquiry in 1847 and 1848, see letters and notes in Pillow to Polk, November 23 and 27, 1847, and Pillow to Polk, December 12, 1847.

FROM MARY BERKLEY CHILDRESS

Dear Sir

Good Spring Ten Sept the 18 1847

I inform you that I have just received a letter from Thomas.¹ He is very much dissatisfied with the Navy and wishes to resign. I wish you would assist him in resigning for he is so much dissatisfied I think he will never do any good there. You must excuse me for troubling you so much. Give my best love to cousin Sarah.²

MARY CHILDRESS

L in author's or John W. Martin's³ hand. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Addressed to "Washington cty/Virginia." From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received October 20, 1847; "Private."

1. Thomas B. Childress.

2. Sarah Childress Polk.

3. Martin (c. 1810–1870s?), a Nashville merchant and slaveowner born in Virginia, was Mary Berkley and William G. Childress's son-in-law.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

My dear Sir/

[Washington City]¹ Sunday Morning 19 Sep. '47

I beg leave to call your attention to an article in the Union of last evening "the Old Whig Issues," in which the editor by adopting the article from the New York Evening Post, had come out in favor of the election of Mr. Lewis to the Senate & against that of Colonel King.² The friends of Colonel King both in Alabama & this City, & I am proud to pronounce myself one, have been watching the course of the supposed organ for some time on this subject. It heralded with peculiar gusto all

the movements of Mr. Lewis when he visited New York on his return from the Board of Visitors to which he had been appointed by Governor Marcy.³ The impression is general throughout Alabama that the administration desire the election of Lewis over Colonel King; & this impression is entirely natural. The Colonel's friends would have been satisfied with a strict neutrality; though even this is a neutrality between a friend & an enemy. But when the organ comes out for the enemy against the friend, it is incumbent on Colonel King's friends to adopt some decided measures to do away the effect of the course of the Union.

I wish merely respectfully to call your attention to this very grave subject. I shall certainly inform Col. King to day that you have not encouraged the Union to take part against him & that you do not prefer Mr. Lewis: & consider myself fully warranted in these assertions. This, however, will not do away the effect of the article, nor remove the impression now extensively existing in Alabama that you desire the election of Mr. Lewis in preference to Colonel King.

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received September 19, 1847.

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. Buchanan refers to Dixon H. Lewis and William R. King, candidates for a U.S. Senate seat from Alabama. The piece in the *Washington Daily Union*, edited by Thomas Ritchie, accuses Whigs of trying to trick voters by claiming to have abandoned efforts to establish a national bank and raise tariffs. It then quotes the *New York Evening Post* article "Predictions of the Protectionists." That article, in turn, quotes Lewis's speech to the U.S. Senate of July 8, 1846, in which he predicted (1) that the recent repeal of the United Kingdom's Corn Laws—reducing duties—would increase trade in both directions between the United Kingdom and the United States, and (2) that the proposed Walker Tariff—reducing U.S. duties—would increase trade still further. The *Post* thus counters claims by supporters of high tariffs that no one had forecast these consequences of the U.K. and U.S. laws. It predicts that Alabama's Democratic-controlled legislature will reelect Lewis, whose term ends next March. Lewis (1802–48), born and educated in South Carolina, moved to Montgomery, Ala., to begin a law practice. A Democrat, he served in the Alabama legislature, 1826–29; the U.S. House, 1829–44; and the U.S. Senate, 1844–48. Though reappointed to the Senate in 1847, he died on October 25, 1848. King (1786–1853), a North Carolina native and an Alabama planter, represented a North Carolina district in the U.S. House, 1811–16, and Alabama in the Senate, 1819–44 and 1848–52. Among other offices, he served as legation secretary simultaneously to the Kingdom of Naples and to Russia, 1816–18, and as minister to France, 1844–46. In the latter post, he was widely credited with preventing official protests from France and the United Kingdom against the 1845 U.S. annexation of Texas. He served briefly as vice president under Franklin Pierce, March 4–

April 18, 1853, until his death. King began his career as a Democratic Republican and ended it as a strident Democrat. The New York *Evening Post*, founded in 1801 by Federalist Alexander Hamilton, was edited by Democrat, poet, and slavery opponent William Cullen Bryant, 1829–78. Free trade was among Bryant's and the *Post's* leading causes.

3. The U.S. Military Academy was established at West Point, N.Y., in 1802. The Board of Visitors, created by a law of 1846 and charged with reporting to Secretary of War William L. Marcy on the academy's activities, met on June 7–17, 1847, for cadets' examinations. The law gave the president, not the secretary of war, the power to appoint its members, though Polk seems to have interpreted it differently; see Polk to James G. M. Ramsey, March 6, 1848. "An Act making Appropriations for the Support of the Military Academy for the Year ending on the thirtieth June, eighteen hundred and forty-seven." *SL*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 196.

FROM JESSIE BENTON FRÉMONT¹

Sir, [Washington City]² Thursday evening Sepr. 21st 1847

I enclose you this notice from the St. Louis Whig paper, the Republican,³ and after reading it you will see the manifest injustice to Mr. Frémont⁴ of letting his accusers⁵ escape from the investigation of the charges they have made against him. There is an impression prevalent, that Genl. Kearny⁶ also is to obtain orders for Mexico, at once. You have the power to do justice & I ask it of you that Mr. Frémont be permitted to make his accusers stand the trial as well as himself. Do not suppose Sir, that I lightly interfere in a matter properly belonging to men, but in the absence of Mr. Frémont I attend to his affairs at his request. I trust he will be returned in a week, when agreeably to your request he will have the honor of calling on you. The precarious situation of his mother⁷ & my own want of health are a sufficient apology for not having presented myself to Mrs. Polk.

JESSIE BENTON FRÉMONT

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. Published in *EJCF*, pp. 388, 390, and Pamela Herr and Mary Lee Spence, eds., *The Letters of Jessie Benton Frémont* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1993), pp. 35–36.

1. Jessie Benton Frémont (1824–1902) was the wife of John C. Frémont, the daughter of Thomas H. Benton, and the author of several books. Due to her father's career in the U.S. Senate, she spent much of her childhood in Washington City, and the family often socialized among Senator Benton's government colleagues. Jessie, thence, had known Polk since her childhood. After her marriage, in 1841, she became a fierce champion of her husband and often acted as his advocate in political matters.

2. Place identified through content analysis.

3. Enclosure not found. Frémont probably enclosed an editorial from the *Daily Missouri Republican*, September 13, 1847, that noted that Capt. Henry S. Turner and Maj. Philip St. G. Cooke, recently returned from California, had received orders to report to Santa Fe and to Mexico, respectively. The journalist inferred, from these orders, “the President did not intend to be in a hurry about ordering a Court Martial to investigate the charges against Col. Fremont.” The St. Louis newspaper in question, established in 1808 as the *Missouri Gazette*, went through several names before becoming the *Missouri Republican* in 1822. It was issued daily from 1836. Polk’s diary entries of June 7 and August 17 do, indeed, note his hope to avoid court-martialing John C. Frémont.

4. John C. Frémont.

5. Henry S. Turner (1811–81), a Virginia native, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1834 and served in the army until July 1848. He became a captain in the First Dragoon Regiment in April 1846 and was brevetted major for several battles fought in California that December. Turner served as assistant adjutant general for the Army of the West, 1846–47. After resigning from the army, he became a St. Louis farmer. He was a witness for the prosecution at John C. Frémont’s court-martial. Philip St. G. Cooke (1809–95), also from Virginia, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1827 and commanded the Missouri Battalion, 1846–47. Promoted to major in the Second Dragoon Regiment in February 1847 and brevetted lieutenant colonel effective the same month, he was given charge of California’s Southern Military District, which was created to replace Lieutenant Colonel Frémont’s California Battalion but to which Frémont refused to turn over his troops. Cooke, too, was a witness for the prosecution at the court-martial. He became a Union general during the Civil War and served until 1873.

6. New Jersey native Stephen W. Kearny (1794–1848) served in the War of 1812 and then at various frontier garrisons. Appointed a brigadier general with command of the Army of the West in the Mexican War, he captured Santa Fe in August 1846 and served as military governor of New Mexico, August–September 1846. He then led most of his forces to California, playing a major role in the U.S. conquest of that Mexican territory; he became its military governor, March–May 1847. He and John C. Frémont clashed over their rival claims of command in California. In spring 1848 Kearny became military governor of Veracruz and Mexico City; in August he received a brevet promotion to major general, effective December 1846. Having preferred the charges against Frémont, he was indeed in Washington City for the court-martial.

7. Anne Beverly Whiting (c. 1780–1847), whose father, a Virginia planter, died when she was an infant, was raised in the home of her stepfather and, later, in that of an older sister. She married amusement park owner John Pryor when seventeen but left with French and dance teacher Charles Fremont in 1811. They moved throughout the South, living at times in Savannah, Ga., where John was born, and Nashville. Charles died in 1817 and Anne, by 1823, had settled in Charleston, S.C. John, on September 17, 1847—under arrest and having arrived in Washington City, as ordered, only the day before—headed to Aiken, S.C., to visit her. He arrived shortly after her death.

TO AARON V. BROWN

Washington City, September 24 and 25, 1847

Polk, on September 24, approves the plans Brown outlined in his letter of September 10 and opines that “Tennessee . . . will remain a Democratic state” despite Brown’s gubernatorial loss. He mentions Leonard P. Cheatham’s letter of September 11 regarding the appointment of officers for the Fourth and Fifth Tennessee Infantry Regiments¹ and the many other letters recommending candidates.² Polk wishes to wait for Brown’s recommendation, however, before making the appointments. He cannot appoint a new general because no vacancy occurred during the Senate’s recess, so volunteer general officers already in Mexico will command the regiments once they join Winfield Scott’s army. The two regiments will remain together unless the army requires otherwise. Polk notes the absence of recent news from the army in Mexico but expects to hear news soon; until then he cannot guess whether peace is forthcoming.

Polk observes that Spencer Jarnagin’s published letter suggests that the Whig would not accept Democrats’ votes for the U.S. Senate.³ Given that Tennessee’s legislature inevitably will elect a Whig senator, Polk believes that the Democrats should support Joseph L. Williams, who supports Polk’s Mexican War policy and is “not factious.”

In a postscript of September 25, Polk acknowledges receipt of Brown’s letter of September 17 along with letters from other Tennesseans nominating surgeons and assistant surgeons for the new regiments.⁴ Polk plans, after discussing the appointments with Daniel Graham and Robert Armstrong,⁵ to make them on September 27 or 28.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked “*Private & unofficial.*”

1. Letter not found. On the call for troops that created these regiments, see letter and notes in Polk to Brown, August 24, 1847. Cheatham (c. 1793–1863), a Nashville lawyer, farmer, and horse-breeder, served as postmaster, 1845–49.

2. Besides Brown’s letter of September 10, the two such letters that have been found are John W. Childress to Polk, September 10, 1847, and John W. Ford to Polk, September 20, 1847.

3. See letter and notes in Brown to Polk, September 17, 1847.

4. Letters of nomination not found.

5. Graham (1789–1869), a native of North Carolina and a resident of Murfreesboro, Tenn., served as Tennessee secretary of state, 1818–30; state comptroller, 1836–43; cashier of the Bank of Tennessee in Nashville, 1846–47; and register of the U.S. Treasury, 1847–49. Armstrong (1792–1854), born in Virginia, served as a militia officer during the War of 1812 and (as a general) the Second Seminole War and as postmaster at Nashville, 1829–45. A Democrat, he ran unsuccessfully for Tennessee governor in 1837. One of Polk’s closest political friends, he managed Polk’s three gubernatorial campaigns and his presidential bid in Tennessee. Following appointment by Polk in 1845, he served as consul at Liverpool, England, until 1852.

TO HOWELL TAYLOR, JR.¹

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Sept. 25th 1847

I have received your letter of the 3rd Instant.² The tract of land lying a few miles North of Somerville, about which you inquire belongs to my nephew, *Marshall T. Polk Jr.* who is now in his seventeenth year. I am his guardian but have no power to sell the land. When he shall arrive at the age of Twenty one years, it is probable that he may desire to dispose of it.

I was gratified to learn from you, that you approve the measures of my administration. Before I received your letter I had not doubted the fact, knowing you as I do, to be a sound Republican of the *Macon school*.³

I write in haste,

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Haywood County, Tenn.

1. Virginia native Taylor (1791–1858), by 1840, had become a Haywood County, Tenn., planter.

2. Letter not found.

3. Polk refers to strident supporters of states' rights and a restricted federal government within the Democratic-Republican party, more often known as Old Republicans or Republicans of '98. Among their exemplars was Nathaniel Macon (1757–1837), a North Carolinian veteran of the Revolutionary War who served in the state legislature before entering the U.S. House, 1791–1815 (as Speaker, 1801–7), and Senate, 1815–28. He was president of North Carolina's constitutional convention of 1835. An opponent of the U.S. Constitution in the 1780s, in Congress he staunchly resisted such Federalist efforts at nationalization as a national bank and protective tariffs. On the term "Republican," see also letter and notes in Polk to James G. M. Ramsey, October 30, 1847.

FROM JAMES H. WALKER

Dear Sir,

Columbia Tenn Sep 25th 1847

Your letter enclosing also a note from the secretary of war informing me of my appointment to a captaincy in the Regt of Voltigeurs¹ reached here a few days since during my absence from home. I hasten to answer it, thanking you for your kindness in conferring the appointment, and also accepting it upon a few trifling conditions only, which I suppose will be altogether inimportant. In the note of the secretary of war, there is also an order for me to repair immediately to Vera-Cruz, which it will be impossible for me to do, and do justice either to myself or the Government, so far as my present office is concerned.

I would much prefer, and in fact, do not see, how I am *well* to do, without, first sending on to the Dept. full returns of my present Office.

I would probably have been enabled to do this without requesting delay, if it had not have been for the unforeseen circumstance, that my Clerk who was left at New Orleans for this purpose was taken down with the Epidemic which has thrown me back.² As it is, conceiving it to be more important to the Government that my present affairs should *be first settled*, I have assumed the responsibility of sending for him to meet me at Memphis, with my papers, where I hope at least by the *1st of Novr* to be enabled to close up every thing in connection with my present office and be ready to leave. Under these conditions I have determined if it shall be agreeable to accept the appointment, which is certainly while I remain in Mexico much preferable to the one which I at present hold.

I see however that you are mistaken in supposing that I wish a *captaincy in the Regular service*, and it is my intention upon the conclusion of peace to risign whether the Regt is disbanded or not. I set out with the intention and I hope yet to see this war to its close, and I am much indebted to you for giving me an honourable position in it, but at its conclusion I expect to retire from the service.

If however upon its conclusion I could obtain some suitable civil office in the United States I must confess that I would be much gratified.

I have concluded to leave my residence blank, and it can be filled up as may seem best. I myself consider Tennessee as my residence, but as I was appointed from Arkansas, *originally for the Arkansas Regt*, this can be arraigned as may seem best, as I suppose it is any way only a matter of form.

JAS H WALKER

ALS. DLC—JKP.

1. Polk to Walker, September 10, 1847, and enclosed but unlocated letter from William L. Marcy to Walker.

2. Walker refers to New Orleans's yellow fever epidemic.

FROM WILLIAM A. SCOTT¹

Sir,

New Orleans 30 Sept 1847

Next to God, I love my country. Athogh in Europe for a part of the first year of our war with Mexico, I have been a close observer of all its various stages. And, I have often designed to write you, if for no other purpose, than to give you an humble line of encouragement. I witnessed with pain the embarrassments thrown in your way by the late Congress & by some of the leading papers. I do not flatter myself that I have superior wisdom to that of your learned cabinet, or that I can impart any thing new to you. But I have supposed that a clergyman as a patriot & citizen has a right to look on and think and pray for the honor, peace

& prosperity of his country. And as an humble individual my thoughts may go in with the many of your fellow citizens to make up the sum of popular feeling in the nation, which I think may be stated somewhat as follows:

1. That the war with Mexico is a just, necessary, honorable & popular war. It is a national war, & must be sustained at all hazards by all parties, & be vigorously prosecuted by all just & honorable means to a satisfactory termination.
2. That the terms of the treaty propounded by Mr Trist were exceedingly mild, easy and moderate, & that as Mexico has spurned this, let all the horrors of war lie at her own door.²
3. That in the event of a Treaty of peace, the right of way across the isthmus of Tehuantepec,³ the Calafornias & New Mexico with Texas to the Rio grande be sine qua non as the basis. Every succeeding year will justify the necessity of our having these possessions. Nothing about slavery or European guarantee⁴ should be allowed in the treaty. And surely all the trophies of our army & navy will not be returned. They should adorn Washington West Point, & every arsenal & Navy yard in our country. Nor should Vera Cruz every be restored to Mexico. England has no better a right to Gibraltar⁵ than we have to Vera Cruz. Spain has Cuba, England has Jamaica &c, in the Gulf. We need Vera Cruz. It would always be garrisoned with men exempt from yellow fever. The glorious stars of our Union should not be allowed to fall from San Juan d'ulloa⁶ till the archangel's trumpet sounds the knell of time. If the Castle must be surrendered again, let it be first blown into ten thousand fragments.
4. If Mexico still persists in continuing the war, let her be made to pay the expenses. She has proudly and wickedly spurned every advance of your clemency. She has been treated with kindness & consideration that she is totally incapable of appreciating. To continue such mild measures towards her is to throw pearls before swine, that will turn again and rend their benefactor. Mexico must now be made to *feel* the burdens of the war. Let her fields & cattle feed our army. Let a contribution be laid upon all her cities. And if need be let her ports & rebellious towns be laid in ashes. There is no other way to deal with such a perfidious, proud ignorant, stupid, pri[e]st⁷ ridden enemy. We have a precedent in the

conquest of Canaan.⁸ We have shed too much precious blood, & spent too much hard earned treasure to trifle with her any longer.

5. It will be necessary to establish a military Govmt. with an army of 50.000 men, & the treasury of Mexico must annually foot the bill. The home Govment at Washington must not cut⁹ all taxes upon American children. Let our armies protect Mexican miners, farmers & traders. Make life & property secure. Invite European imigration. Offer land bounty. [&c]¹⁰ And in a few years Mexico will be regenerate. She will become a blessing to us, to herself and to the civiilzed world. This is what God designs as the end of this war. The Almighty is in all history. His Providence fills up every page of human events. &C.

And finally, of course wherever our arms & our laws prevail there will be a free & perfect toleration of all religions. I repeat it, my Dear Sir, so deeply am I interested in the welfare of our beloved country & th good of our race, that for many months I have designed to write you in substance what is contained in these lines. But I have delayed until now, fearing that I should trespass on your time, or be considered troublesome. I fear the next Congress.¹¹ I fear there will be too much long speech making. I have no doubt but that a majority of the American people are with you, & concur in the general views I have presented. I hope you will be able to give the whole business its final shape before Congress opens. If my views which are formed with much reflection and after considerable attention to the history of both present & past generations, should meet with your approbation, or if it should afford you any encouragement in th midst of your very arduous duties to know that you have the sympathies and fervent prayers of one of your humble fellow citizens, I shall be most amply repaid for this writing.

May God Almighty bless you with th fulness of his grace & wisdom.

W. A. SCOTT

[P.S.] We are yet in the dark here as to the details of the taking of Mexico on th 13' inst.¹²

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received October 10, 1847; "Patriotic letter upon the subject of Mexican War."

1. Scott (1813–85) was a Presbyterian minister born in Tennessee and educated at, among other places, New Jersey's Princeton Seminary. In the 1830s he served as a missionary, president of the Nashville Female Academy, and pastor

of the Hermitage Church on friend Andrew Jackson's Nashville estate. Scott led congregations in Tuscaloosa, Ala., around 1840 and in New Orleans around 1842. He remained in New Orleans until 1854 and edited the *New Orleans Presbyterian* after its establishment in 1847.

2. See letter and notes in Polk to William O. Butler, August 7, 1847.

3. Mexico's Isthmus of Tehuantepec had attracted attention since the sixteenth century as a possible location for a canal or, more recently, a railroad linking the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Ocean. In April 1847 Polk instructed Nicholas P. Trist to make the right of transit across it a condition for a peace treaty. The Mexican government refused the request, noting that it already had granted that right to British developers. The United States eventually obtained the sought-after right of transit in the Gadsden Treaty of 1853, but never developed the route.

4. Scott refers to a potential guarantee of the terms of a U.S.-Mexico treaty by a European nation, a notion favored by Mexico's government but not by the United States'.

5. Spain ceded Gibraltar to Great Britain under the Treaty of Utrecht (1713), which ended the War of the Spanish Succession.

6. Construction began on the Castle of San Juan de Ulúa, overlooking the port of Veracruz, in 1565. Following the Mexican War of Independence, the fortress became, in 1825, the last Spanish fort to fall to rebel forces. The redoubt served as a prison for political prisoners until its capture by U.S. forces in March 1847.

7. Letter inserted to complete probable meaning.

8. Scott refers to the Israelites' conquest of Canaan, recounted in the book of Joshua.

9. Scott apparently uses "cut" to mean "levy," a historical definition associated with Ireland.

10. Character or characters uncertain, obscured by tape.

11. With the 30th Congress, which first sat on December 6, 1847, Whigs took control of the House, though Democrats retained a majority in the Senate.

12. Scott wrote his postscript to the left of his signature. He refers to the U.S. capture of Mexico City. After taking nearby Molino del Rey on September 8 and Chapultepec on September 13, 1847, Winfield Scott's troops began their assault on the capital. Santa Anna led his troops away to Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo, the capital's municipal authorities surrendered, and the Americans entered Mexico City on September 14. For the next two days, its residents waged an attack—ultimately suppressed—on the U.S. troops.

OCTOBER

FROM DUFF GREEN¹

Dear sir Washington 1st October 1847

A party of Mormons driven from their homes by the mob,² of Illinois, being compelled to leave the greater part of their property behind them were unable to proceed beyond the head waters of Grand river where they made a temporary residence.³ Destitute of the necessaries of life and without the means to purchase them they must perish unless they obtain relief from some source.

They have deputed two of their number, to make an appeal in their name to the people of the United states. One of whom Mr. Charles R. Dana⁴ is now in this City, and, encouraged by your permitting a body of his people to enter the Service of the United states,⁵ desires to thank you for what you have done, and to ascertain whether you can give them further aid.

He requests me to ask of you the favor of a personal interview, and that you will name an hour when he may call upon you.

DUFF GREEN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. Published in Davis Bitton, “American Philanthropy and Mormon Refugees, 1846–1849,” *Journal of Mormon History*, 7 (1980), p. 67.

1. Green (1791?–1875), a lawyer and journalist, served in the Missouri House, 1820, and Senate, 1822. He edited the St. Louis *Enquirer*, 1824; the Washington *United States’ Telegraph*, 1826–36; the Washington *Reformation*, 1836–38; and the New York *Republic*, 1844. While at the *Telegraph*, Green shifted his support from Andrew Jackson to John C. Calhoun; he afterward became an important Whig. In 1844 John Tyler appointed him consul at Galveston on a failed mission to facilitate Texas annexation.

2. Green wrote a period here because the word “mob,” for “disorderly crowd,” is an abbreviation of “mobile,” used in that sense into the nineteenth century.

Youre people are all well at this time except 1 or two and the ar going a bout.

The coten is late matuuring but is nough opening fast. The catapiler worm is noug coting the coten rapid but it being later in the season than last year I think the coten will not be so much ingered. I still think I shal Make a far crop.

Enny houg your crop is as good as enny I have sean in the nabor hood.

I hav on ly picked out about 35 thousan pounds. 13 bags packed. I have gethered some corn. The cane is vary good.

Evy has a child born 8the of septtember. She calls him Leander.²

We are giting on vary well with the negro clothing. I think we will ras aplenty of polk³ to seve youre plantation.

The stock all lucks as well as cold be exspected. I have nothing more worth your attention. . . .

JOHN A MAIRS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

2. Evy, or Eve, (c. 1815–?) was purchased from Kentucky for Polk’s Fayette County, Tenn., plantation in 1831. She had at least one child there before Polk separated her from her husband by sending her to the Mississippi plantation. There she married Polk’s slave Phil, with whom she had ten more children. Six of her children probably died before adulthood. Phil and Eve were the only couple on the plantation to labor as a pair. They remained there after Polk’s death. The son whom Mairs here calls “Leander” (1847–1849?) is likely the one who died, possibly of scarlet fever, c. January 27, 1849, though Mairs gives his name as “Luchos” in Mairs to Polk, February 8, 1849, and Mairs to Polk, April 19, 1849. ALsS. DLC–JKP.

3. Poke, or pokeweed, is a common crop with edible leaves. Polk’s supporters wore its leaves when he campaigned for the Democrats in 1840 and during his own presidential bid in 1844.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

[Washington City, October 2, 1847]¹

Will the Pres. take time to look over these Resolutions² by Tuesday?

C. J.

ANI. DLC–JKP. Delivered by hand or courier on October 2, 1847.

1. Place and date identified through content analysis and from Johnson’s letter of Tuesday, October 5, 1847.

2. The enclosed resolutions advance a strict construction of the Constitution and praise Polk’s administration generally, then specifically praise the Walker Tariff (criticizing the Black Tariff and observing that the West’s agricultural

surplus requires low rates that promote foreign trade), the Independent Treasury (affirming the “*separation of Bank and State*” and denying the constitutionality of a national bank), and the Warehousing System. They go on to express preference for a 54° 40' Oregon boundary but approval of the 49th-parallel compromise; to “approve of” Texas annexation and “all subsequent measures for the defence and protection of the territory of that State to the Rio Grande”; to assert that Mexico started the war by invading Texas and killing Americans and that a peace “shall secure an ample indemnity for the past and security for the future”; to declare that any American’s “attempt to disparage the cause of our country, to weaken and embarrass the Administration in its efforts to carry on the war successfully, and to ‘aid and comfort’ the enemy by speech or action, would be factious and treasonable,” as would votes in Congress against supplies for the military; and to praise the president, cabinet, and army on conducting the war. D, draft, in Johnson’s hand. DLC–JKP. This document is possibly an early draft of resolutions for the Democratic National Convention of 1848. The resolutions passed by that convention include similar provisions about the Constitution, Polk, tariffs, banking, the start of the war, and an indemnity. The final resolutions constituted the Democratic party’s platform for the presidential election of 1848. *PDNC*, pp. 19–21.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

[Washington City]¹ Oct. 5h 1847

I enclose other resolutions.² I hope you may have leisure during the day to examine these & the others left on your table last saturday.³ I will call up this evening. I enclose you a slip from Lexington K.y, which my correspondent (Ficklin)⁴ thinks was *written* or *approved* by Mr. Clay.⁵

C JOHNSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably delivered by hand or courier on October 5, 1847. From Polk’s AE: “Resolutions &c./*Private*/not to be placed on Register.”

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. The enclosed resolutions affirm that, before the Constitution, the states were “sovereign”; that, through the Constitution, they gave the national government only those powers “expressly delegated”; that the states reserved for themselves full control over “their internal domestic institutions,” including slavery, leaving the national government “no power over it whatever”; that the federal government can neither “establish . . . nor abolish” slavery in the territories, a restriction necessary for the slave states’ “safety and protection”; that new states, in their constitutions, “may establish . . . or abolish it”; that any new territory obtained “by purchase, compact, or conquest” will, during its territorial period, “remain free or slave” depending on its status at annexation (see note in Andrew Lane to Polk, August 3, 1847); and that the Wilmot Proviso “is an absurdity betraying a total ignorance of the true theory of the Governmt of the United States; and if it were to be adopted by Congress, would prove in its pract-

ical operation to be a nullity.” D, draft, in Johnson’s hand. DLC–JKP. Like the resolutions that Johnson had submitted to Polk three days earlier, these may have been intended for consideration for the Democratic National Convention of 1848. That convention’s resolutions included similar provisions about states’ “domestic institutions,” particularly slavery. *PDNC*, p. 20.

3. Enclosure in Johnson to Polk, October 2, 1847.

4. Democrat Joseph Ficklin (1775–1859) served as postmaster at Russellville, Ky., 1802–12; consul at Sweden’s St. Bartholomew’s Island, 1816–20; and postmaster at Lexington, Ky., 1822–41 and 1843–50. He edited the Lexington *Kentucky Gazette* in the early 1820s. A Transylvania University trustee, he housed student Jefferson Davis in 1824.

5. Henry Clay. Enclosure not found.

FROM STEPHEN ADAMS

Dear Sir

Aberdeen Mi. 7th Oct. 1847

I suppose Mr Lea¹ has informed you of the result of your land suit at Coffeenville, but he may have neglected to do so, I therefore write you this note. Judge Rogers² informs me, that your friends compromised it, & Rayborn dismissed his suit. The Judge says R. is a candidate, and the suit was likely to injure his election.³ Your friend Mr Lea Sr⁴ talked very plainly to him which had its influence. I am gratified at the settlement of this little matter, both on account of your feelings and that it ocured in Mississippi. I desire you to have a better opinion of our people, than Rayborns conduct would justify you in forming.

I am picking cotton, driveing the wagon &c. &c. much delighted with my residence in the Country and the improvements I am makeing on my farm. Three democrats certain from this State—Roberts⁵ still doubtful. I understand Roger Barton will run against Col Davis⁶ for Senator. I can form no opinion as to the result, they are both strong men.

S. ADAMS

N.B. You told me, you would approve of Col Medill’s Report, as to the removal of the Cobb & Pickins tribe of Indians.⁷ I have heard nothing from it since I left. I fear the Col is still determind to do nothing in the buisness. *S. Adams*

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received October 18, 1847; “Private.”

1. Armistead C. Leigh (1818–50), John T. Leigh’s Virginia-born son, practiced law in Yalobusha County, Miss. John A. Mairs hired him in the spring of 1847 after John K. Rayburn brought the first of his two suits to retain land that Polk had lost due to nonpayment of taxes.

2. Francis M. Rogers (c. 1815–1862), born in Georgia and raised in Alabama, became an Aberdeen, Miss., lawyer and planter. A Whig, he served as a Mississippi district court judge, 1845–53.

3. John K. Rayburn, in November 1847, was elected clerk of the Yalobusha County circuit court.

4. John T. Leigh.

5. Robert W. Roberts (1784–1865) practiced law in his native Delaware and served as a Tennessee circuit court judge before moving to Alabama and, finally, to Hillsboro, Miss. There he was a lawyer and a planter. He served as a Mississippi circuit court judge, 1830–38; in the state house, 1838–44 (as Speaker, 1842–43); and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1843–47.

6. Roger Barton and Jefferson Davis. Barton (1802–55) practiced law in Knoxville and Bolivar, Tenn., before serving in the Tennessee House, 1829–31, and as state attorney general for the Eleventh Judicial District, 1831–36. He moved to Holly Springs, Miss., in 1836 and served in the Mississippi House, 1839 and 1850. He was often a Democratic candidate for the U.S. Senate. Kentucky native Davis (1808–89) graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1828 and served in the army until becoming a Mississippi cotton planter in 1835. A Democrat, he served in the U.S. House, 1845–46; in the U.S. Senate, 1847–51 and 1857–61; and as secretary of war under Pres. Franklin Pierce, 1853–57. He was president of the Confederate States of America, 1861–65. Colonel Davis commanded the First Mississippi Rifle Regiment, 1846–47, but declined Polk's May 17, 1847, offer of a brigadier generalship on June 20. In January 1848 Davis, the incumbent, was chosen over Barton to represent Mississippi in the U.S. Senate.

7. Polk's letter to Adams, if any, not found; Polk's diary and letters make no mention of a conversation to which Adams could refer. William Medill's report of November 24, 1845, to William L. Marcy accompanied Polk's First Annual Message to Congress on December 2. It began by reporting on the removal that year by four contractors—including Samuel Cobb and James Pickens—under an agreement of 1844 of 1,182 Choctaws from Mississippi to Indian Territory, today's Oklahoma. House Document No. 2, 29th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 448–56. The Choctaw, at the time of Europeans' arrival, had lived in today's Mississippi and nearby states. The first Indian nation to be removed west of the Mississippi River, they ceded their land in Mississippi under the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, signed in 1830, and began a series of marches to Indian Territory in 1831. Cobb and Pickens were Choctaw captains who initially agreed to remove the Choctaw from parts of Mississippi in 1843. Cobb, either all or half Indian, may early on have lived in Alabama. He signed a Choctaw-U.S. treaty in 1820 and, under a provision of the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, became a U.S. citizen and acquired a farm on the Pearl River in Mississippi. He became a vocal defender of Choctaw land rights. Pickens (c. 1780s–?), of Leake County, Miss., had a white father and likely a Cherokee mother. He signed the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek and, like Cobb, became a U.S. citizen and a Mississippi landowner under it. He remained in Indian Territory, in what became Apukshunnubbee District and later McCurtain County, after removal.

FROM WILLIAM L. MARCY

Dr Sir

[Washington City]¹ Oct. 7. 47

I send you an order for the transfer from the Navy to the War Dept. \$1200000. of the ten Millions of Mex. hostility fund, & desire it may be signed.²

Also a statement or rather an estimate by the Adj. Genl. as to the probable number of mustered Volunteers who have not served or gone the seat of war.³ I will call this evng or early to morrow morning on the latter subject.

W. L. MARCY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed “note to President.”

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. Along with the order, which has not been found, Marcy probably enclosed a letter to him from John Y. Mason, dated October 7, 1847, enclosing the order and noting that the transfer would not hurt the Navy Department’s finances. ALS. DLC–JKP. The transfer addressed a shortfall, discovered by the administration in August 1847, in the War Department’s finances. Marcy here and Polk in his diary entry of August 19 refer to the ten million dollars appropriated by the May 13, 1846, law declaring war against Mexico as “the Mexican hostility fund.” “An Act providing for the Prosecution of the existing War between the United States and the Republic of Mexico.” *SL*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 16.

3. Enclosure by Roger Jones not found.

FROM EDMUND BURKE¹

Sir,

Patent Office, Oct. 9, 1847

I have the honor to enclose a copy of the Boston Post, containing a letter which I prepared for that paper, in relation to the misrepresentations of the letter-writers connected with the Army in Mexico.²

I also enclose a letter from the Hon Nathl G. Upham, of Concord, N.H. upon the subject of international copy-right.³ I can add nothing to the views which he has expressed in so able and condensed a form. But, pardon me for suffering, that similar views expressed in the Message, would command the applause of the enlightened in all civilised countries. It may be opposed by the selfish in our own country; but what can be more disgraceful than the robbing of a poor author of the just fruits of his labors. The literary men of both hemispheres will hail with delight such a recommendation in the annual Message of the American President. And I am confident it will increase the reputation which your Administration has already justly attained for enlightened liberality.

EDMUND BURKE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally; marked “*Private*.”

1. A native of Vermont and an attorney and newspaper editor, Burke (1809–82) represented a New Hampshire district as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1839–45, and served as commissioner of patents, 1845–49.

2. Enclosure not found. Burke apparently refers to a letter dated September 1847 at Washington City and signed “G.,” which was published in the *Boston Post* on October 4. That letter criticizes Whig correspondents of newspapers, especially the New Orleans *Picayune*, for minimizing the contributions of Democratic volunteer generals. It asserts, in particular, that letter writers misrepresented William O. Butler’s role in the Battle of Monterrey and that Whigs both in Tennessee and in Mexico lied about Gideon J. Pillow’s roles in the Battles of Cerro Gordo, Contreras, and Churubusco so as to slow his political rise. The *Post* letter then dismisses claims by unnamed “officers of the ‘regular’ army” that volunteer officers, lacking military training and experience, thus lack skill in battle. Intelligent volunteer generals, the writer concludes, not only will lead soldiers effectively but also will influence politicians’ decisions about the postwar army—promoting the elimination of the “standing army” in favor of raising a force of “citizen soldiers” when needed.

3. In the enclosed letter to Burke, dated September 28, 1847, Nathaniel G. Upham observes that the United States and other countries grant foreigners basic rights, hold them responsible for crimes, and guarantee them the protection of person and property. But current laws, he points out, do not protect foreigners’ copyrights. He asks Burke to pass on to Polk his suggestion that the president recommend in his Third Annual Message to Congress a law protecting the copyrights of citizens of foreign nations that do the same for Americans’ copyrights. Polk, however, elected not to discuss the topic in his message, and Congress did not consider such a law. Upham also notes in his letter, “A gentleman of some standing in Massachusetts, friendly to the President, remarked to me after the establishment of the new Tariff, the settlement of the Oregon question, & the movement on Mexico, ‘that President Polk was desirous of doing every thing that would have to be done within the next fifty years.’” ALS. DLC–JKP. The reference is likely to George Bancroft, whose famous but dubious later claim about Polk’s four goals as president is discussed in Tom Chaffin, introduction to Volume 12 of this series, pp. xxxiii–xl, xlix–li, and in Chaffin, *Met His Every Goal? James K. Polk and the Legends of Manifest Destiny* (Knoxville: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 2014). Upham (1801–69) practiced law in Bristol and, from 1829, Concord, N.H. He served as a New Hampshire Supreme Court judge, 1833–43; superintendent of the Concord Railroad, 1843–63; and president of that railroad, 1863–66. A Democrat, he was appointed a claims commissioner to the United Kingdom by his friend Pres. Franklin Pierce in 1853.

FROM JACOB L. MARTIN¹

My dear Sir—

Paris 9. October 1847

I have but time to say by the French steamer,² that the articles which Mrs. Polk requested me to purchase for her have been shipped by the

Håvre packet of the 8th of this month, and will probably arrive at New York early in November. As soon as I can collect the bills I will draw upon you for the amount, probably by the steamer of the 19th when I shall also drop a line to Mrs. Polk, upon the subject.³ I would have despatched them sooner, but the lady upon whose taste & assistance I relied was in the country, and I did not like to trust to my own judgment in matters with which a bachelor is not supposed to be familiar.

The recent news from Meaico has filled our hearts with gladness,⁴ and we are anxiously waiting for the official reports of Genl Scott.

J L MARTIN

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked Paris, October 9, 1847, and New York City, November 1, 1847.

1. North Carolina physician Martin (c. 1805–1848) was legation secretary to France, 1844–48. Earlier he had served as chief clerk of the U.S. State Department, 1840–41. For two weeks before his death, he was the first chargé d'affaires at the new mission to the Papal States.

2. Martin wrote on the cover, "*French steamer 10th October / Cherbourg.*"

3. Martin later sent Polk his draft on the president for \$477.70 at Greene & Cie., an American bank in Paris, dated October 23, 1847, and a receipt signed by Ebénézer Thayer, that bank's agent, and others, dated October 30. Neither document identifies the items. Partly printed DS and DS. DLC–JKP.

4. Martin probably refers to the U.S. capture of Mexico City in September 1847.

FROM THOMAS J. READ¹

Dear Sir.

Louisville [Ky.]² Oct. 11. 1847

Many of our Democratic friends in this State feeling that they have been neglected or overlooked by the Governor of Kentucky³ in his appointments of field Officers for the Volunteer Regiments to serve in Mexico, and believing that a further call for Volunteers will be made, are anxious to ascertain if *they will* immediately raise a Battallion of Volunteers to serve during the War in Mexico, whether they would be accepted.⁴

I am pleased to have it in my power to assure you that the right spirit is abroad in Kentucky, and almost any number of good men and true can be had to carry on the War in Mexico, for "subjugation and conquest."⁵ If Battallions & armies can be accepted by you, let me hear from you and if you will only say the word the boys will be on hand quickly. Your friends & the friends of our country are ready and willing and more than anxious that the Olive branch be now thrown away, and cold steel and hot shot be administered freely, heartily to the robbers & murderers, who have possession yet of a portion of Mexico.

Feeling a deep interest in the honor and welfare of our common country and the success of your administration, I have ventured to thus address you plainly and frankly, and will feel deeply thankful for a reply through the Secretary of War, or Col. Walker your private secretary.⁶

I am glad to hear that you are recovering from your late attack.⁷

THOS. J. READ

P.S. Col. Minor is at my hand now, and authorizes me to say to you that he can raise and have ready to start for Mexico a battallion of the right kind of boys in 30 or 40 days.

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Read (c. 1791–1860s?), a Virginia native, ran for local office in Nashville in 1835 and 1836 before, in 1836, starting a commission and forwarding business in Louisville, Ky., with Samuel Ewing. By 1839 he was operating Thomas J. Read & Son, a business of the same type whose customers included Polk. He served as postmaster at Louisville, 1845–49.

2. State identified through content analysis.

3. William Owsley.

4. The two regiments received in October 1847 were the last units accepted from Kentucky for service in the Mexican War.

5. Elias B. Holmes, a congressman from New York who opposed the Mexican War, used this term to describe its goals in a speech in the U.S. House on June 18, 1846. Several newspaper writers thereafter employed the term.

6. William L. Marcy and Joseph Knox Walker.

7. Polk, according to his diary, suffered a chill and then a fever on September 25, 1847. He grew sufficiently ill to stay in bed from September 27 to October 4. He remained somewhat sick or weak—but worked as much as he could—through October 17. Sarah Childress Polk was ill at the same time as her husband.

FROM GEORGE ABERNETHY¹

Sir

Oregon City 14 October 1847

It would be well for us as a Territory if we had authority to send a Delegate to the Congress of the United States to represent our situation and present circumstances, but we cannot do it, as the jurisdiction of our Government has not been extended over us. Neither can we send a Minister to represent our Government as we are but a temporary fixture expecting every few months to come under the permanent Government of the United States.² Placed in this predicament we have sent Petitions and Memorials to Congress but thus far without much effect.³ Your Excellency has been pleased to manifest a deep and untiring interest

in our affairs for which we as a people feel very grateful. But you cannot as a matter of course be acquainted with our wants as no person has gone from us to represent our case. It seems almost necessary for some one who has resided here and become somewhat acquainted with its wants and interests to be in Washington. I cannot doubt that your Excellency would feel relieved from some embarrassment by having near you a Gentleman of intelligence, prudence and veracity whom you could consult with reference to facts at least.

The Hon. J. Quinn Thornton⁴ Judge of the Supreme Court of Oregon proposes to go on to Washington at his own expense believing that the Government of the United States will in some way compensate him. And I trust that I may be permitted to express the hope that your Excellency will not deem it inconsistent with the public welfare to appoint him to an office the salary connected with which will in some degree enable him to realize these just expectations. If as it has been stated by some you intend filling the offices of this Territory with the residents of Oregon, (except the Governor) I know of no man in the Territory better qualified to fill one of the Judgeships than Mr Thornton.

For some two or three years past the Indians have been getting alarmed at the number of Americans that have been coming in,⁵ and as they are pushed into corners in some places, they have become dissatisfied, and demand pay for their land, some persons have paid them, others will not. Last summer the Indians in Tualatin County told a Farmer on the outskirts of the settlement that he must pay them or leave the place before sundown. They were persuaded to remain quiet until I could be sent for. I immediately went out and met the Indians, they expected to be paid at once for their lands and their expectations were pretty high. We were then certain that officers would be on here in the fall and I quieted them with the thrice told tale, there will be a person here when the immigrants come in in the Fall, that will look after your interests. We have been disappointed, what should we do, tell them next year? They say you told us so before, we are dying off, soon we will be all gone, and then we shall get nothing, we want Blankets & now. How I shall get along with them I do not know. I am in hopes Mr Chas Pickett⁶ will arrive here if he hears he has an appointment as Indian Agent and relieve us in some measure. The above is our condition in the settled part of our land where bands of Indians reside. If they get no pay they perhaps will steal horses, cattle & in return some of them may get shot and lead us all into trouble. A war with Indians you know very well is a very troublesome, affair. This fall a skirmish took place at the Dalles between a few immigrants who were packing in ahead of the Waggon and a party of Indians. One white man was killed and two wounded.

The Indian chief was killed and one Indian wounded.⁷ The Indians were very much exasperated. The Missionaries residing there⁸ sent down for me to come and settle the difficulty. I went up at once and settled it. They returned all the property they had taken except a few things of not much value and insisted on having 4 Cows that the Missionaries had promised them to pay for their chief. I told them one white man had been killed by them therefore it would not be right to pay them any thing. As the Indian custom in making up differences is to exchange presents which heals all old difficulties I proposed to give them four cows provided they would give me four good Horses. After some delay they agreed to this and the difficulty was settled. They promised not to molest the Americans in any way and if any property was stolen in their neighborhood to make immediate reparation. I had not much more than returned to the Willamette before I heard the Indians on the Columbia near John Day's river had robbed three Waggon⁹; our people will come in small parties and unless a small patrol party is kept up on that river while the immigrants are coming in they will be insulted and things stolen from them, and sometimes Waggon's robbed. A very few mounted men would keep the Indians all quiet and orderly while the immigrants were passing through their territory. John Day's River is about 200 miles from the settlements and a range of Mountains intervening. I might make a few suggestions on other points. But should you deem it advisable to consult with Judge Thornton he will more fully remark upon subjects connected with our interests, than it will be possible for me to do in a written communication. I may mention some few items that if granted would benefit us much. And here let me say the expenses attending my visit to the Dalles were borne by the Methodist Mission and as there was no appropriation made by our Government for such a contingency the Superintendent Revd. Wm Roberts¹⁰ thought the U.S. Government would refund the expense, as it was undertaken to protect American interests and allay the excitement in that distant quarter. With regard to our wants. A recognition of all our Legislative and Judicial Acts, that are not inconsistent with the law which may be passed organizing a government here. Grants of land to settlers. Land for educational purposes. Appropriations for the transportation of the Mails in Oregon and to Oregon (we have Postmasters and an Agent¹¹ but No Mails). A Government Steamer at the mouth of the Columbia river to tow vessels in and out and a few Buoys would make our harbor accessible at all seasons of the year. There is no doubt but a Naval depot will be located in Oregon either in the River or at Pugets Sound at some future day and by ascertaining what our River is, will decide whether it is a good point or no. Supplies of all kinds can be furnished at the mouth of the River for the Navy in a very few years. A Military post at

the mouth of the River and a few small posts along the Columbia to give protection to the immigrants. Surveying and laying out a road from the Western States to Oregon Territory a great amount of property is annually lost in consequence of the badness of the roads. An appropriation for the opening and improving such a road would be of great benefit to American citizens coming this way. We are under the impression that a Steamer is to ply between Panama and the Columbia River touching at California.¹² This would bring us into the civilized world once more. Two weeks ago we were gratified with the receipt of your Message delivered in December 1846.¹³ We saw extracts from the Message in California and Sandwich Island Papers but not the Message itself in full until last week, and we are very anxious to know what is doing at Washington as we feel very much interested in proceedings there.

But I do not feel at liberty to trouble you with a lengthy communication and shall close by remarking that I write this as a private citizen and not as Governor of Oregon Territory, that I do not wish it made public because my intentions would be by some misconstrued. Hoping you will excuse these few lines

GEO. ABERNETHY

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “(Private and confidential).” From Polk’s AE: received May 12, 1848; “Relates to affairs in Oregon, and the great necessity for an organized Government in that Territory.” Published in *BPHO*, pp. 300–302. Extracts published in Horace S. Lyman, *History of Oregon: The Growth of an American State*, vol. 4 (New York: North Pacific Publishing Society, 1903), pp. 82–84.

1. Abernethy (1807–77) was a New York City merchant before he sailed to the Oregon Country as a lay Methodist missionary in 1839–40. He operated the mission store until 1844, when most of the mission’s bases closed and he, purchasing much of its property, became an Oregon City merchant. He served as Oregon’s provisional governor, 1845–49.

2. The U.S. House had passed bills creating a territorial government for Oregon on February 3, 1846; August 6, 1846; and January 16, 1847. The Senate, however, had passed none of these. Polk did not sign a bill creating a territorial government until August 15, 1848. From 1845 until that bill’s signing and the arrival, in March 1849, of territorial governor Joseph Lane, Oregon maintained a provisional government headed by elected governor Abernethy.

3. Congress, in December 1845, received two memorials from Oregon’s residents (one dated June 28, 1845, and one undated as printed) and one from its provisional legislature (dated July 17, 1845) calling for the establishment of a territorial government. See them in *Congressional Globe*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, p. 24; House Documents Nos. 3 and 42, 29th Congress, 1st Session.

4. Jessie Quinn Thornton (1810–88), a lawyer born in western Virginia and raised in Ohio, practiced in Missouri—where he also edited a Palmyra newspaper—and Illinois. In 1846 he went to Oregon, where he served as chief justice

of the provisional government's supreme court, 1847. A Democrat and an abolitionist, he headed to Washington City that year to lobby for the establishment of a territorial government and for the Wilmot Proviso. Despite Abernethy's recommendation here, Polk did not appoint him to office.

5. In the first mass migration by U.S. citizens into the Far West, thousands in the 1840s made their way to Oregon. The first wagon train left the Independence, Mo., area in 1841, and the rate of migration along what came to be known as the Oregon Trail drastically increased over the next several years.

6. Charles E. Pickett (1820–82), a Virginia native and an acquaintance of Polk from his days as Tennessee governor, went to Oregon in 1843. In 1845 he started the handwritten Oregon City *Flumgudgeon Gazette and Bumble Bee Budget*, likely the first newspaper on the Pacific coast, and was appointed district judge of Clackamas County. He also served on the Oregon Rangers, a newly established militia. He then lived in San Francisco, 1846–48. In late 1847, returning from a visit to Hawaii, he learned of—and declined—his appointment by Polk as Indian agent for Oregon. In 1848 he became the Sonoma correspondent of the San Francisco *California Star* and, once the gold rush began, a general-store owner at Sutter's Fort.

7. This incident occurred on August 22, 1847, between white settlers and Indians of Wascopam village. After settlers took horses from the Indians, in retribution for the latter's allegedly stealing horses from them, armed Wascopam men came to the whites' camp. A shootout ensued, in which a settler named Shepherd (or Sheppard) killed war chief Yacoetar (or Equator, or Boston chief) and was killed in return. Sources give the surnames of wounded whites as Markomer, Parkman, and Aram but do not name the wounded Wascopam man or men. The Indians then demanded four horses but the settlers gave them one horse and two blankets; Methodist missionaries promised them four cows before enlisting Abernethy's intercession. Shepherd (?–1847) was, according to newspaper reports, from St. Francois County or St. Louis County, Mo. Yacoetar (?–1847) had become Wascopam village's war chief, due to his intellectual and physical qualities rather than birth, by 1839. He allied with the Methodist missionaries, not only converting and (at least in appearance) abandoning polygamy but also preaching to his people as an intermediary. In 1844 he seems to have moved his family to the mission to avoid a dysentery epidemic. In 1847 he started a farm.

8. The Methodists established their mission, the first in Oregon, in 1834 and greatly expanded it in 1840. In 1838 they opened their base at The Dalles, near Wascopam village, in an area inhabited by speakers of Upper Chinookan, or Kiksht, and speakers of Columbia River Sahaptin, who called themselves the Wanałáma. The American Board of Commissions for Foreign Missions—the United States' oldest foreign-missionary organization, founded by Congregationalists in 1810—established its Oregon mission in 1836. Though the missionaries also worked with white residents, their primary goal was to convert Indians. In 1844 the Methodists closed most of their missionary bases in Oregon and began the process of selling that at The Dalles to the American Board. The sale was completed in September 1847.

9. Two tributaries of the Columbia River are called the John Day River. Abernethy refers to that in the eastern, not that in the western, part of present-day Oregon, well east of the Willamette River. According to white accounts of the incident to which Abernethy refers, Walla Walla Indians robbed four settler families, taking not only the contents of their wagons and possibly their cattle but also the clothing worn by at least some of the women and children. Another party of settlers soon discovered the victims, one of whom later valued her family's losses at \$2,500. The Walla Walla, speakers of a Sahaptian language, long had lived along the lower Walla Walla River and at the conjunction of the Snake and Columbia Rivers in the present-day states of Oregon and Washington. Despite this incident, they maintained peaceful relations with white Americans until the 1850s.

10. Born in New Jersey, William M. Roberts (1812–88) became a Methodist minister in Philadelphia in 1834. After surveying California and establishing a church at San Francisco, he served as superintendent of the Oregon mission, 1847–49—reviving the largely defunct organization—and of the Oregon and California Mission Conference, 1849–53. He went to The Dalles in August 1847 to finish the transfer of the mission base there to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

11. John M. Shively was postmaster at Astoria, Oregon, 1847–49; David Hill was postmaster at Oregon City, 1847–48; and Cornelius Gilliam was special agent in charge of mail service in Oregon, 1847–48. Kentucky native Shively (1804–93) worked as a teacher, a St. Louis dry-goods merchant, and a surveyor before moving to Oregon in 1843. In 1845 he went to Washington City, where he advocated for the establishment of mail service to Oregon and published *Route and Distances to Oregon and California, with a Description of Watering-Places, Crossings, Dangerous Indians, &c. &c.* (1846). He served concurrently as postmaster and justice of the peace at Astoria. In 1849–50, during the gold rush, he left Oregon for California. Hill (1809–50), born in Connecticut, went to Oregon in 1842 and, probably in 1845, settled at a location that became known as Hillsborough in his honor. He was involved in the establishment of the provisional government in 1843 and served on the First Executive Committee, 1843–44; in the provisional legislature, 1845 and 1847–49; and in the territorial legislature, 1849. Gilliam (1798–1848), born in North Carolina, served as Clay County, Mo., sheriff, 1830–34, and in the Missouri senate, 1838–44. He attained the rank of militia colonel while forcing the Mormons to leave the state in 1838. Ordained a Baptist minister in the 1840s, Gilliam moved to Oregon in 1844–45. He was killed by an accidental gun discharge while commanding Oregon's white forces in the Cayuse War.

12. On the steamship lines between Charleston, S.C., and Astoria, Oregon, via the Isthmus of Panama and California, see note in Joel Turrill to Polk, August 29, 1847.

13. Reference is to Polk's Second Annual Message to Congress.

TO JAMES BUCHANAN

My Dr. Sir:

Washington Oct. 16th 1847

I have prepared the accompanying rough draft in haste.¹ It contains the general outline of my views. Will you examine it, make any modifications suggestions or transpositions of the topics treated of you choose, and indeed I will be obliged to you, if your leisure will permit, if you will make an entire new draft, embodying your own views.² From the two, the paper as it may be finally agreed upon, can be prepared. *Be careful to let no human being, see the draft in my hand-writing, & when you are done with, them, I will be obliged to you to return the sheets to me. I wish to get this weighty matter off my mind & the sooner you can prepare your draft the more gratified I will be.*

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. PHi. Probably addressed locally; marked "*confidential.*" From Buchanan's AE: "October 16. 47." Published in *WJB*-7, p. 438.

1. On October 13-15, 1847, Polk wrote the first draft of the part of his Third Annual Message to Congress about the Mexican War. He read it to the cabinet on October 16 and that evening sent it with this letter to Buchanan, whom work had prevented from attending the cabinet meeting. AD, draft. DLC-JKP.

2. Buchanan did not write on Polk's draft, but did write his own draft, which the president then edited. D, draft, with emendations in Polk's hand. DLC-JKP.

FROM VERNON K. STEVENSON

Nashville, October 17, 1847

Stevenson answers Polk's letters of August 10 and September 3, 1847. He recounts "the shock of the Magazine which toor all of the windows sash and all out of your house & near all of the plastering off it."¹ He reports that Polk is "out in the repairs generally but 200\$." Stevenson agreed to pay James M. Hughes another two hundred to demolish and rebuild the heavily damaged "back wash & Negro house" and a total for all repairs of \$6,200 plus the cost of the copper roof. Today having examined the house and written a contract for Hughes's work, Stevenson describes at length the repairs and improvements to the house and grounds that he specified in the contract.

Stevenson reports that he has "not received the notes from Mr. Anderson."² Because John M. Bass has left the house, "two very trusty servents"³ with watchdogs have been sleeping in it. Hughes, at Stevenson's direction, boarded up the windows to keep out rain. Stevenson notes that, if he receives the money at Bolivar, Tenn., that Polk mentioned on September 3, he will deposit it rather than give it to Hughes immediately.

Oct, 16, 1847

Confidential

My dear Sir:

I have prepared the accompanying rough
draft in haste. - It contains the general outline of my
views. Will you examine it, make any modifications
suggestions ~~of~~ or transpositions of the topics noticed
of your choice, and indeed I will be obliged to
you, if your leisure will permit, if you will
make an entire new draft, - embodying your
own views. - Should the two, the papers
to may be finally agreed upon, can be pre-
pared. - Be careful to let no business
bring, - see the draft in my hand-writing;
I when you are done with ~~them~~, I will be
obliged to you to return ^{the sheets} them, to me. -

I wish to get this weighty matter off my
mind & the sooner you can prepare your
draft the more grateful I will be. -

Most faithfully

Wm. L. Buchanan

Your friend &c. -

James K. Polk

Washington Oct 16th 1847

James K. Polk to James Buchanan, October 16, 1847. James Buchanan papers (Coll. 91), Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received October 1847; “Relates to my private business; . . . Wrote to *Mr Stevenson* Feby. 12th 1848.”

1. On October 12, 1847, lightning struck a gunpowder magazine on Capitol Hill in Nashville. The explosion, according to newspaper reports, shook the entire city and destroyed more than fifty buildings. It killed at least ten people and left many more injured or homeless.

2. Stevenson may refer to payments due from Bolivar, Hardeman County, Tenn., which Polk mentions in his September 3 letter to Stevenson. Several men named Anderson lived in Hardeman County, none of whom has been confirmed to have owed money to the president.

3. Reference is probably to slaves owned by Stevenson.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT¹

My dear Sir, 90 Eaton Square London. 18 October. 1847

I heard yesterday so curious an anecdote, that I must send it to you. The Duke de Broglie,² now French Ambassador here, said a few days ago to a person of very high station & exceedingly well acquainted with the views of the British Government, “How do you explain that the English Government look on and witness the immense successes of the United States in Mexico? How is it possible for them to consent to the vast acquisitions of power and territory, which the U.S. are making in those regions?” This he said, as one who wondered that England had not proposed to France a renewal of the *entente cordiale*,³ in reference to this very subject of Mexico. The Duke received for answer, that Great Britain was too wise a country to interfere in such a cause; that Mexico in the hands of the people of the United States would be to England of far more value than she ever was before in respect to commerce and security of property invested there. This little manifestation of a regret at the vanishing of Mr Guisot’s Balance of power in North America,⁴ seemed to me irresistibly ludicrous.

The prevalent opinion seems to be, that we shall make peace. If you could be certain of being sustained, I could wish you might be able to dip into the Gulf of California & save Guymas⁵ for us. But the peace with or without Guymas, provided it secures the Californias, will be welcomed in England by all friendly to America; while the unfriendly will tut & fume & submit.

I have been very much encouraged in reference to our navigation interests.⁶ It has been my good fortune to see intimately & almost familiarly some connected with affairs of Trade. My only fear of entire success beyond any point you would have conceived possible, springs from what I cannot shut my eyes to, the great weakness of this ministry.⁷

They may lose their places, sooner than they think for; their strength lies in the absence of any powerful competitor willing to take their places. If they remain in power, they propose, after first getting power from Parliament, to negotiate with us for permitting the indirect trade, & (what I had not dared hope for,) *to make such changes in the registry laws as will permit our shipbuilders to sell them ships*, we agreeing also to do away with our prohibition of buying theirs.⁸ On this last point they will meet a stronger opposition in parliament than they expect. But this they have, in answer to my overtures, consented to propose. I feel sure, our shipbuilders, whose fathers a hundred years ago, had ships for their chief article of manufacture, will exult, if we succeed in such a negotiation. In that event ships for the English Market might be built all along the Mississippi & Ohio. We have timber, iron, & skill; and I believe our New England ship-builders, who could easily transfer themselves to the west, are willing to meet the competition of the world. If I am wrong in my view of your wishes on this matter give me a word of restraint. (My own experience in commercial affairs as Collector at Boston, has helped me very much in conversing on these affairs.) On the other hand, the coasting trade & the fisheries, & that part of the colonial trade which may be called coasting trade, will be reserved. The colonial trade generally, that is from the United States to the West Indies, or to the Northern provinces, is to be thrown open; but the trade between St John's & Halifax for example, to be considered as coasting trade.⁹ These results, if accomplished, will signalize your administration: & I have received plain, frank assurances from Mr Labouchere¹⁰ that they will be attempted. I fear nothing, as I said before, but the feebleness of this ministry; & it has no hold on the affections and not much on the confidence of the people, in consequence, in part, of the great distress, which attaches justly or unjustly the complaints of the unreflecting.¹¹

Our postal convention will come out right, provided Mr Johnson on & after the 16th of November shows the requisite firmness.¹² The English Post Office flatters itself, it can use our mails to Canada; &, to be sure, give up closed mails, but take their letters to Boston & New York & drop them into our Post Office to be forwarded. That should not be allowed until a convention is signed; but Mr. Johnson should say, he would treat them, as they treat us; viz. make them pay 1 shilling sterling the 1/2 oz. as a transit duty. He has special power as to the Canada mail to do what is "*expedient*;"¹³ & he has general power for the conduct of foreign mails. The only way to deal with this government is, to treat them as equals. Much of the trouble could have been avoided, if Mr Johnson had, through me, notified the British Government in advance of the intended coming of the Washington,¹⁴ & given me power to make

the necessary arrangements. But I have no doubt this will all end well, though with more delay & with more that is disagreeable, than if it had been begun seasonably through the usual channels.

Give my best regards to Mrs Polk.

GEORGE BANCROFT

[P.S.] What I have written about the Navigation Acts must be treated as a cabinet secret. The communication to me of the result of the English cabinet councils, must be considered in the highest degree confidential. I shall, at an early day, include this & much else in an official letter.

ALS. MHi. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked "For the President alone."

1. A teacher, historian, and politician from Massachusetts, Democrat George Bancroft (1800–1891) played a key role in securing Polk's nomination at the Democratic National Convention of 1844. He served as collector of the port of Boston, 1837–41, and, under Polk, as secretary of the navy, 1845–46, and minister to the United Kingdom, 1846–49. He is best known for his ten-volume *History of the United States* (1834–74). At Harvard University, from which he graduated in 1817, he was a classmate of Caleb Cushing. Bancroft, in the 1880s, introduced the now-famous anecdote about Polk's setting four goals for his presidency; see note in Edmund Burke to Polk, October 9, 1847.

2. Born in Paris, Achille Charles Léonce Victor, Duke of Broglie, (1785–1870) held many positions in France's governments, including as minister of public worship and instruction, 1830, and minister of foreign affairs, 1832–34. He left public service in 1836 but served as ambassador to the United Kingdom, 1847–48, and in the revolutionary National Constituent Assembly, 1848.

3. French expression meaning "friendly understanding." Its diplomatic usage was first employed during this era to denote the newly amicable relations between France and the United Kingdom. The term has since acquired more general currency in diplomatic affairs.

4. François Guizot, in a speech to the Chamber of Deputies on June 10, 1845, argued that France would benefit from a continued "balance of power" in the Americas among the United States, the United Kingdom, and the formerly Spanish-controlled republics. Democratic U.S. politicians, including Polk—who promoted the Monroe Doctrine—interpreted his position as threatening to the United States.

5. On the day Bancroft wrote this letter, Mexican forces at Guymas, on the Gulf of California, refused a demand by U.S. Navy captain Elie A. F. Lavallette to surrender the fortified town. Two days later, on October 20, U.S. Navy and Marine forces took Guymas by force.

6. Bancroft refers to American distaste for the Navigation Acts. Passed by Parliament mostly between 1650 and 1766, they mandated that many goods traded between the British empire and foreign countries or between Great Britain and its colonies be carried on British ships with mostly British crews

and be shipped through British ports. Consistent with mercantilist theory, the acts were designed to protect Great Britain from foreign competition and to maximize profits from its colonies. The restrictions became less popular amid growing nineteenth-century support for free trade. Parliament repealed them in 1849 and 1854.

7. Bancroft refers to the ministry of Lord John Russell (1792–1878). Heading Whig and Liberal party governments, Russell served as prime minister of the United Kingdom, 1846–52 and 1865–66. He served in the House of Commons, 1813–55 and 1859–68.

8. Registration with a national government enables a vessel to sail internationally. A British law of 1845 restricted registration with the United Kingdom to British-built or -seized ships. A U.S. law of 1792 restricted registration with the U.S. government to ships built in the United States (or its location before independence), seized by Americans, or owned by Americans since 1789. “An Act concerning the registering and recording of ships or vessels.” *SL*, 2nd Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 1. Parliament repealed the restriction in 1850 but Congress did not.

9. Bancroft refers to sea trade between St. John’s, Newfoundland, and Halifax, Nova Scotia, in Canada, formally known as the British North American Provinces.

10. Henry Labouchere (1798–1869), a member of the British Whig party, was president of the Board of Trade, 1839–41 and 1847–52. Among other political offices, he served in the House of Commons, 1826–59, and as chief secretary for Ireland, 1846–47.

11. Bancroft likely refers to the famine, caused by the potato blight, that beset Ireland and Scotland in the middle to late 1840s. Among its consequences were a demand for U.S. foodstuffs (a demand increased by the inability of France, Belgium, and other European countries to meet that need), intensified Irish dissatisfaction with the British rulers, and Irish emigration to the United States.

12. In June 1847 the U.S. government began carrying mail by steamship between New York City and Southampton, England. The British government elected to charge on mail carried by that line the full postage that it would have charged for overseas transit on British ships, thus roughly doubling the cost of transit. Between then and February 1848, Bancroft and First Assistant Postmaster General Selah R. Hobbie tried, unsuccessfully, to negotiate a new arrangement with British officials, chiefly Postmaster General Ulick John de Burgh, Marquis of Clanricarde. Hoping to force concessions, Postmaster General Cave Johnson canceled all postal arrangements between the United States and the United Kingdom as of November 1847. On June 27, 1848, Polk signed a retaliatory bill to charge on mail carried on British ships the same amount the British charged on mail carried on American ones. Bancroft and the British finally reached an agreement, under which each country rescinded its charge, late in 1848. The convention was signed on December 15 and ratifications exchanged on January 28, 1849.

13. Bancroft quotes a law of June 15, 1844, that empowered the U.S. postmaster general “to make such arrangements as may be deemed expedient

with the Post Office Department of the British government for the transmission of the British mail in its unbroken state or condition between Boston and Canada." "A Joint Resolution in relation to the transmission of the British mail between Boston and Canada, and for other purposes." *SL*, 28th Congress, 1st Session, Number 14.

14. It was on the Ocean Steam Navigation Company's *Washington* that both Hobbie and the double-charged mail traveled to England in June.

TO AARON V. BROWN

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Oct. 18th 1847

Before this reaches you, you will have ceased to be Governor Tennessee, but your labours in support of sound principles, are properly appreciated by the whole country, and will be remembered.

I have read your Message with pleasure, and without undertaking, to express an opinion, on all the points of state policy, I must congratulate you, upon what you have said on National affairs, and especially in relation to the War with Mexico.¹ Your views are patriotic & such, as all true friends of their country, who are not blinded by party zeal, must approve.

I have desired for some time to write you, more fully than I have heretofore done, upon the future policy and course to be pursued by our political friends in the State. There is but one proper course in my judgment, and that is to adhere undividingly to their principles, and to act in concert and harmony, with their political friends in other states. The usage of holding a *national convention* to nominate candidates for the Presidency and Vice Presidency must not be departed from. *Factions* of the party, taking opposite and extreme grounds, on, the *Wilmot Proviso-agitation*, have already appeared in the *South* and in the *North* who have,² manifested, I fear a [reckless]³ disposition, not only to distract and divide the Democracy, but to sacrifice the harmony, if not endanger the Union itself, with [out any] higher motive, than to elevate a *favourite* to power. These factions must be rebuked by the party, in harmonious council, in a National Democratic convention. The ground therefore, which I think our political friends in Tennessee, should take firmly and boldly, is that they will abide by the nominations of a National convention. They should hold themselves uncommitted to *men*, until the proper time. The *Taylor*-movement of the Whigs in Tennessee, is but a second [rotation] of the *White* affair.⁴ They intend by the use of his name, to keep themselves, if possible, a little longer in power. That *Genl. Taylor* is a decided Whig & always has been, and that he is even violent in his prejudices and feelings, there can be no doubt. No Democrat, who is not willing to surrender his principles, can unite with the leading Whigs of the state in such a movement.

I am glad to see that a state convention has been proposed, and seems to meet with favour, to meet at Nashville on the 8th of January. This I approve. Let pains be taken to have the state fully represented in the convention. Let the Convention appoint Delegates to the Baltimore convention, and also the whole number of electoral candidates, to which the state is entitled.⁵ The *4th of July*, has been named as the time, and *Baltimore* as the place, for the meeting of the National convention. I concur fully in the time and place suggested, and think the state convention should adopt and recommend it. Our *papers* in the state should *at once* do so, and in advance of the meeting of the state convention. The State Convention should issue an address to the state, embodying their principles, and distinctly presenting the present political issues. It will probably be proper for them, to avow no preference for a Presidential candidae, but leave our Delegates to Baltimore untrammelled. For the *Vice Presidency* they may, if you approve, express their preference. Some one on the spot, must give direction to public sentiment upon all these matters & you stand in the position to do so.

In regard to the Senator to be elected our party may be powerless. All that they can do, will be to select between, the *men* of their opponents. I am more than ever satisfied, that, the Democracy, should strain every nerve to elect *Joseph L. Williams* of Knoxville. He is a *Whig*, but he is a patriotic *Whig*, and would support the Government in all its War Measures. From what I learn, the Democracy of the Legislature can elect him, if they are united. If he was at Nashville, he could undoubtedly command considerable support from the patriotic portion of his own friends. Let him run on the ground, which he really occupies, that is, that he is a *Whig*, but in favour of the vigorous & energetic prosecution of the War, and that if elected he will support the Government in its War Measures. These I understand are his sentiments. If he could be induced to go to Nashville, if there be time before the election is brought on, I am satisfied he might be elected.

I have just recovered from a severe attack of fever. I was confined, to my chamber for ten days. I am now well, but have not yet recovered my strength. I shall be careful of myself, so as to avoid, if possible a relapse. I shall be exceedingly busy until the meeting of Congress.

We have nothing *official* from the army. My anxiety is very great, to have the *official details* of its gallant operations before the City of Mexico. Reinforcements amounting to about 15.000. men, are either on their way, or have been called out, for *Genl. Scott's* army.⁶

I have written a long letter, and must close. I hope to hear from you soon.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked “(confidential).”

1. See letter and notes in Brown to Polk, September 17, 1847.

2. Polk probably meant to put “who have,” which he inserted with a caret, after the comma.

3. Word or words here and below uncertain, blurred ink transfer.

4. Polk refers to erstwhile Democrat Hugh L. White’s presidential candidacy in 1836 despite the Democratic party’s nominating Martin Van Buren.

5. The Democratic state convention met on January 7–8, 1848. After resolving in favor of Polk’s administration and the Mexican War, it selected presidential electors and delegates to the Democratic National Convention. It endorsed Brown—as well as Levin H. Coe and William O. Butler—as a potential vice-presidential candidate.

6. These included the 4,500 new troops discussed in Polk to Brown, August 24, 1847, and the First Mississippi Rifle Battalion, discussed in Anonymous to Polk, August 31, 1847.

FROM ALFRED BALCH

Dear Sir,

Nashville 25th Oct. 47

The Whigs in the Legislature are in much trouble. The number of candidates for each office in their gift is unusually large. The great prizes to be fought and intrigued for are the Judgships of the supreme court and the Senatorship. For the former the candidates are Hynes Sneed and Lyon. Nathan Greane Turley McCampbell Milton Brown Geo W. Gibbs.¹ For the latter Netherland Reese Jarnigan Js [A.]² Whiteside Searcy, Topp, Kit Williams.³

All but Whiteside are solid Whigs of the Webster⁴ school. The latter has declared openly that he is in favor of a successful and vigorous prosecution of the war with Mexico and of the Tariff of 46.⁵ For myself I am for Whiteside openly and above board and so will be the feeling of the Democratic members to a man. If W has 6 Whigs with him he will be elected. Bell⁶ has been diplomatizing but I think unsuccessfully. We have some accts to settle with this *founder* of the Whig party in Ten. and we will try to do it honestly.

The politicians here are looking earnestly already to the next Presidency. Cass⁷ has friends at work who are endeavouring to enlist the feelings of the Democratic members of the Legislature so that they may speak favorably of his claims when they return to their constituents in Feby. I have endeavoured to counteract all these schemes, and I believe successfully by taking ground openly for Buchannon and Butler⁸ as vice. I have no confidence in Cass. I do not believe that he has as much moral courage in his soul as there is in one flea. I formed this opinion of him when I was acting as commissioner under the Creek Treaty⁹ and when I was in official correspondence with him.

For Buchannons letter to the Democrats of Berks¹⁰ I feel that I owe him in all justice ten thousand thanks.

I heard part of Peytons speech at the Taylor meeting.¹¹ It was a flat affair. There was not one Huzza for Taylor. The crowd seemed resolved to follow the example of the General. They were wholly “non committal.”¹²

Genl Butler has been here. He has his aspirations and goes to the field resolved to gather new laurels. We *must* have one military hero upon our ticket in 48. As to Butler and myself we have been like twin brothers for 30 years. Our town is in a course of rapid improvment. Every mechanic in the city is hard at work and 200 more would find employment if they were here.

With respects to Mrs P I remain . . .

ALFRED BALCH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received November 1847.

1. Robert H. Hynds, William H. Sneed, Thomas C. Lyon, Nathan Green, William B. Turley, Andrew McCampbell, Milton Brown, and George W. Gibbs. Hynds (1802–56), a Dandridge, Tenn., lawyer, served in the Tennessee Senate, 1835–37. He was a Whig presidential elector in 1844. Later he served as a special circuit judge, 1852–53, and as a judge on Tennessee’s twelfth circuit, 1853–56. Sneed (1812–69) practiced law in Murfreesboro, Greeneville, and, beginning in 1845, Knoxville. A Whig, he served in the Tennessee Senate, 1843–45. Later, as a member of the American (also known as “Know-Nothing”) party, he served in the U.S. House, 1855–57. Lyon (1810–64), born in Roane County, was a Knoxville lawyer. In 1836 he was an army major involved in the removal of Indians from Tennessee. He served as U.S. attorney for the state’s eastern district, 1845–49, and, at times, as a special judge of the state supreme court. Green (1792–1866), born in Virginia, practiced law there and in Winchester, Tenn. He served in the Tennessee Senate, 1827–29; as a judge of the Eastern Chancery District, 1827–31; and as a state supreme court judge, 1831–52. Turley (1800–1851), born in Virginia, became a Clarksville, Tenn., lawyer. A Democrat, he served as a judge on Tennessee’s eleventh circuit, 1829–35, and on the state supreme court, 1835–50. McCampbell (1797–1884), born in Virginia and raised in Knox County, Tenn., worked as cashier of the state bank’s Knoxville branch before becoming a lawyer in Paris, Tenn., in 1824. A Democrat, he served as judge of the chancery court of West Tennessee, 1839–47. Brown (1804–83), born in Ohio, studied law in Felix Grundy’s office in Nashville, then practiced in Paris and Jackson. He served as judge of the chancery court of West Tennessee, 1837–39, and as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1841–47. Brown was also a promoter of railroads and of higher education. Gibbs (1785–1870), a North Carolina–born lawyer, bank president, and Tennessee militia officer, lived in Elizabethton, Ky.; Sparta, Tenn.; Nashville; and, from the 1830s, Obion County, Tenn. He served in the Tennessee Senate, 1813–15; in the Tennessee House, 1825–27; as judge of the chancery court of West Tennessee, 1839; and as a Whig presidential elector, 1840. Though Green and Turley served on the Tennessee Supreme Court in

1847, the vacancy that Balch discusses went to none of these men. It was filled by John A. McKinney.

2. It is uncertain whether Balch wrote James A. Whiteside's correct middle initial.

3. John Netherland, William B. Reese, Spencer Jarnagin, James A. Whiteside, Granville D. Searcy, Robertson Topp, and Christopher H. "Kit" Williams. Netherland (1808–87), a Virginia-born Whig and lawyer, lived in Franklin, Kingsport, and, after 1837, the area of Rogersville, Tenn. He served in the Tennessee Senate, 1833–35; in the Tennessee House, 1835–36 and 1851–53; and as a presidential elector, 1836 and 1848. Searcy (1807–53), born in Nashville, became a lawyer in Somerville; Tipton County; and, from 1846, Memphis. A Whig, he served in the Tennessee House, 1835–37 and 1849–51, and as a presidential elector, 1848.

4. A native of New Hampshire and later a resident of Massachusetts, lawyer Daniel Webster (1782–1852) served in the U.S. House, 1813–17 and 1823–27; in the U.S. Senate, 1827–41 and 1845–50; and as U.S. secretary of state, 1841–43 and 1850–52. Originally a Federalist, he had become a Whig by the early 1830s. During most of his career, Webster advocated for a strong national government, the abolition of slavery, and New England manufacturing and maritime interests.

5. Walker Tariff.

6. Tennessee lawyer John Bell (1797–1869) was successively a member of the Jacksonian, Anti-Jacksonian, Whig, American, and Constitutional Union parties. He served in the U.S. House, 1827–41, and—winning the appointment Balch discusses here—the U.S. Senate, 1847–59. He was Speaker of the House, 1834–35, but lost his bid for reelection to that post to Polk. After heading Hugh L. White's 1836 presidential campaign in Tennessee, Bell became one of the state's most powerful Whigs. In 1860 he ran unsuccessfully for president on the Constitutional Union ticket.

7. Lewis Cass.

8. James Buchanan and William O. Butler.

9. With the Treaty of Cusseta, signed in 1832, the Creek ceded all their remaining land east of the Mississippi. Cass, as secretary of war, signed it on behalf of the United States. Balch served on a federal commission investigating allegations of fraud in the purchase of Creek land, 1836–38. The Creek were a collection of southeastern Indian peoples who, in the colonial era, were at peace with one another and were classified together by the British. They ceded their land to the United States through a series of treaties signed between 1790 and 1832; forcible removal west to Indian Territory began in 1836.

10. In a letter to Charles Kessler et al., dated August 25, 1847, Buchanan declines an invitation to the Harvest Home, a September 4 meeting of Berks County, Penn., Democrats. After stressing the importance of Pennsylvania's upcoming elections for governor and canal commissioner, Buchanan explains his opposition to (without naming it) the Wilmot Proviso. He argues for the extension of the Missouri Compromise line, banning slavery north of 36° 30' and leaving the decision to states south of that latitude. He opines that the people of

California and of the area between the Rio Grande and the Rocky Mountains, if annexed by the United States, would reject slavery; he considers the section of New Mexico east of the Rio Grande to be part of proslavery Texas. The letter appeared in various newspapers, including the Nashville *Republican Banner* of September 8 and the Nashville *National Union* of September 15.

11. A meeting promoting Zachary Taylor for the presidency was held on October 9, 1847, near the state capitol, in Nashville. Balie Peyton, the main speaker, argued that both Democrats and Whigs could support Taylor. As quoted in the *National Union* of October 20, Peyton described the general as “a whig” but endorsed him as a “no party candidate.” Peyton (1803–78), a Gallatin, Tenn., lawyer, served in the U.S. House, 1833–37, then moved to New Orleans and served as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Louisiana, 1837–41. He was an aide-de-camp on Gen. William J. Worth’s staff during the Mexican War. Originally a Democrat, Peyton became a Whig during his time in Congress.

12. Balch probably quotes the *National Union* article (or the equivalent in the Nashville *Union*, that weekly’s daily edition), titled “Taylor Meeting”: “The speech was as non-committal as the most non-committal of Gen. Taylor’s letters.”

FROM DANIEL T. JENKS¹

My Dear Sir

Philadelphia October 25th 1847

I have received an appointment in the Custom House, that pleases me very well; and as your Excellency were so good as to speak to Col. Page,² to appoint me: I shall ever feel grateful, for this special kindness manifested by you towards me.

We will have a great battle to fight in 48. and good old Pennsylvania from present prospects will not fail to do her duty. I hope your Excellency is entirely restored.³ May the same Providence that has thus far guided your course still continue to smile on you. Remember me to your good Lady and allow me to subscribe myself as heretofore . . .

DANIEL T JENKS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received November 6, 1847.

1. Democrat Jenks (c. 1798–1860) in 1845 relocated from Bucks County, Penn., to Philadelphia and in 1847 was appointed, through Polk’s influence, to a clerkship in the Philadelphia Customs House.

2. James Page.

3. On Polk’s illness, see letter and notes in Thomas J. Read to Polk, October 11, 1847.

FROM WILLIAM L. MARCY

Sir.

War Dept. Oct 25, 47

The accompanying communication from the Counsel of Lt Col. Fremont¹ came into the department about two o'clock to day. I send it to you agreeably to your request.²

W. L. MARCY

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. John C. Frémont's court-martial was held in Washington City, November 2, 1847—January 31, 1848. He was tried on charges of mutiny, disobeying an order, and conduct prejudicial to military discipline. Thomas H. Benton and William Carey Jones served as his counsel. Marcy enclosed herein their letter to Adj. Gen. Roger Jones, dated October 25, 1847, and its enclosures. The lawyers repeat Frémont's request of September 17, denied by the adjutant general, that he be tried for charges made anonymously in newspapers—including those enclosed—some of which Benton attributed to Capt. William H. Emory and Maj. Philip St. G. Cooke. They also seek his trial for "all his conduct during the war," including his "having commenced hostilities against the Mexican authorities in California without instructions from his Government" (a trial would bring out information that his subordinate rank otherwise prevented him from revealing) and his challenging Richard B. Mason to a duel in April 1847. They "*Protest*" what they view as "the trial of Commodore [Robert F.] Stockton . . . in the person of Lt. Col. Frémont" and request copies of numerous military documents. They note but accept the three charges brought against Frémont for the same act. They ask to move the trial from Fort Monroe, Hampton, Va., to Washington City, closer to people and resources that they may need, given that other potential witnesses for the defense are in California or the Pacific. An enclosed article, titled "California—Trouble in the Camp" and quoting a *Pittsburgh Gazette* of May 1847, charges Stockton and Frémont with permitting Mexicans to retake parts of California; Frémont with turning from Stephen W. Kearny's side of the dispute to Stockton's in order to win appointment as governor and with "making improper and incorrect reports to the administration for sinister purposes"; and the Polk administration with concealing disagreement within the cabinet over whom to support out of "fear of offending Col. Benton, father-in-law of Fremont, and Com. Stockton." An enclosed clipping from the *Baltimore Sun* of May 6, 1847, (though identified as from June) suggests "that, through the influence of Col. Benton, Col. Fremont is to be or had been put in command over" Kearny. ALS and PDs. DNA—RG 94. From Roger Jones's AES to ALS: given to Marcy. These documents have been published in *EJCF*, pp. 435–44; the lawyers' letter, also in *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, November 6, 1847. Polk describes that letter in his diary entry of October 25 as "making requests or demands in reference to his trial, some of which cannot be granted." Lawyer and journalist William Carey Jones (1814 or c. 1816–1867) was born in Maine and raised in Ohio. He published Ohio's

Buckeye & Gallipolis Journal, 1834–35; coedited the Dubuque (Iowa) *Visitor*, 1836; edited the Scioto (County, Ohio) *Gazette*, 1839–40; and wrote for the New Orleans *Commercial Bulletin*, 1844–47. A Whig, he worked as a federal clerk in 1840. In March 1847 he married Benton's daughter Eliza Preston Carrington Benton. In March 1849 Pres. Zachary Taylor appointed him secretary of the Mexican Claims Commission.

2. Marcy may refer to his meeting with Polk the morning of October 25.

FROM THOMAS P. MOORE¹

My dear Sir

Mexico² Oct 26th 1847

I have addressed you several guarded letters since my arrival on the coast of this country.³ I say guarded, because I apprehended that which is highly probable, happened that they would be intercepted by the Guerrillas. I need not trouble you with a recital of the series of brilliant victories, of privation, & sufferings & deaths since our debarcation at Vera Cruz; it has been attempted by letter writers & others, but it never can be realized by our friends at home. I believe with a single exception (& he is a whig & has resigned,) your appts of officers have met danger as fearlessly as the oldest veterans of the army, & have often in individual cases, & corps gone far ahead of them. Your most abused appts Maj Genl Pillow & Brig Genl Shields⁴ have surpassed the expectations of their friends, particularly the former in his display of Military knowlege as well as military talent. True some of the Juniors Capts Lts &c who are brave fellows, but who came to the country, for a fight & a frolic, are bad wild colts, bad disciplinarians, & hard to restrain or learn duty, *not a few* of those in my command. From Vera Cruz under even the mindless & unfortunate McIntosh⁵ & afterwards successively commanded by the amiable Cadwallader⁶ & Maj Genl Pillow I was most happy, not so since I have been placed under the command of Col Harney⁷ who is the personification, of cruelty, caprice & ignorance, & who is only distinguished by having passed the ordeal of twenty eight court martials, & in most cases subjected to a severe reprimand or other punishment. Genl Scott is one of those that arrested him & reprimanded him in unmeasured terms. Yet as one of the few fishy democrats here who talk of the Genl. as a [Democr]⁸ candidate for the presidency, he is enabled to browbeat better men than himself of inferior rank, & to practice such lawless outrages as ought to cashier him, often & often in the face of the army, tying up waggoners & soldiers & inflicting from fifty to one hundred lashes on their backs, or beating them unmercifully with a stick.

If Congress sends an adequate force here to garrison the principal points, the war is practically over, an occasional Guerrilla conflict, but

all else will be irksome camp duty, in which I shall be ordered to collect forage & do a thousand other such glorious duties by my superior in rank & my acknowledged inferior in all else & always in the rudest tone that he may induce me to resign in favor of one of his *own* Regt. He makes no complaint of my not doing my personal duty proper, but I will not harrass my officers, or inflict other than lawful punishment upon my men. I remain in quarters (Barracks) in a unlit part of the city toil like a beaver, while he lives in a Genls Mansion with 20,000 dollars of furniture in it, indulges in every luxury & every vice & issues his capricious & contradictory orders. I have written to Mr Boyd & Genl Cass⁹ my friends Maj Genl Pillow Genls Cadwallader & Pierce write by this mail,¹⁰ & you will see my friend Genl Shields who promises to explain my wishes. I am now nearly fifty three years of age, & if the wishes of my friends & myself should be met, it will result in the promotion of Maj Cass,¹¹ represented as a most promising officer, & others below him.

Sincere regards to Mrs P. & Col Walker¹²

T P MOORE

PS. Such was the panic of the Mexicans on the 20th at noon that I could have gone to the Plaza with 500 Dragoons with whips in their hands, unhurt.¹³ "The Yankees are coming" was the univeral cry. No honest man can deny this.

P.S Since the foregoing was written, I learn that Col Harney & myself are both ordered to the US, he to get a Brevet, I to recruit, my command of the 3d Dragoons being reduced from 495, to 195 effective men. I have not altered my views, or changed my wishes. T P Moore

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Moore (1795–1853), a Virginia native and a War of 1812 veteran, served in the Kentucky House, 1819–22, and represented a Kentucky district in the U.S. House, 1823–29. A Jacksonian, he was appointed by Andrew Jackson minister at Bogotá, 1829–33 (the country there was Gran Colombia until 1830 and New Granada thereafter; see notes in Francis Amay to Polk, March 23, 1848). He rejoined the army as a lieutenant colonel in March 1847 and served in the Third Dragoon Regiment, April 1847–July 1848.

2. Content analysis indicates that Moore was in Mexico City.

3. Letters not found.

4. Gideon J. Pillow and James Shields. Shields (1810–79), a lawyer and Democrat from Ireland, served in the Illinois House, 1836–37; as a judge of the Illinois Supreme Court, 1843–45; and as commissioner of the General Land Office, 1845–47. Commissioned a brigadier general in 1846, he earned the brevet rank of major general at Cerro Gordo, where he was shot through a lung. In

1848 Shields was appointed governor of Tampico and then governor of Oregon Territory, a post he eventually declined. He later served in the U.S. Senate, representing Illinois, 1849–55; Minnesota, 1858–59; and Missouri, 1879. He remains the only person to have represented three states in that body.

5. A Georgian, career army officer James S. McIntosh (1787–1847) fought in the War of 1812, during which he was wounded at Buffalo, N.Y., and in various Indian wars. During the Mexican War, in May 1846, he was bayoneted at the Battle of Resaca de la Palma, after which he left active military duty. He later returned to service, and he was killed, in September 1847, at the Battle of Molino del Rey. At the time of his death he held the brevet rank of colonel.

6. George Cadwalader.

7. Born in Tennessee, William S. Harney (1800–1889) moved to Louisiana before joining the army in 1818. After participating in the Black Hawk and Second Seminole Wars, he went to Mexico as colonel of the Second Dragoon Regiment in 1846 and was brevetted brigadier general for heroism during the Battle of Cerro Gordo.

8. Moore struck out the bracketed text.

9. Linn Boyd and Lewis Cass. Boyd (1800–1859), a Tennessee-born farmer and Democrat, served in the Kentucky House, 1827–30 and 1831–32, and represented a Kentucky district in the U.S. House, 1835–37 and 1839–55. He was Speaker of the House, 1851–55.

10. Franklin Pierce to Polk, October 26, 1847; letters by Pillow and Cadwalader not found. A New Hampshire lawyer and Democrat, Pierce (1804–69) served in the state house, 1829–33 (1832–33 as Speaker); in the U.S. House, 1833–37; in the U.S. Senate, 1837–42; and as U.S. attorney for New Hampshire, 1845–47. After declining an appointment from his friend Polk as attorney general in 1846, he accepted a commission as brigadier general in March 1847. He was wounded in August 1847 during the battle of Contreras, but continued his military service until the following March 20, after the conclusion of hostilities. In 1852 Pierce defeated Whig nominee Winfield Scott to become president.

11. Lewis Cass, Jr., (1814–78) born in Detroit, was appointed an army major on March 3, 1847. He joined the Third Dragoon Regiment in April and served until July 1848. Polk did not promote him, though in December 1847 he became acting inspector general at Monterrey. He later served as chargé d'affaires to the Papal States, 1849–54, and as minister there, 1854–58.

12. Sarah Childress Polk and Joseph Knox Walker.

13. Moore may refer to Mexicans' reactions to an earthquake. Lt. Col. Ethan Allan Hitchcock's diary records Mexico City residents' kneeling to pray during an earthquake on October 2, 1847 (Hitchcock did not write in his diary in late October). W. A. Croffut, ed., *Fifty Years in Camp and Field: Diary of Major-General Ethan Allen Hitchcock, U.S.A.* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1909), pp. 307–8.

FROM FRANKLIN PIERCE

My dear Sir Head Quarters 3d Division
Calle de Cadena [Mexico City] Oct 26, 1847

Our old friend Colo' Moore¹ leaves with the train for the coast tomorrow and altho' the character of this people or rather the chiefs, who have so long oppressed this people so perfectly put at fault all calculations, that one hadly dares to speak with regard to what he may at the moment be disposed to regard as *prospects* he can still thank God speak of his friends, especially of those whom he has known long and well. Colo Moore has been in this war what he was at home and I cannot to you, who know him well speak more emphatically. But considering his capacity, the stations he has occupied in civil life, & the fact, that he is now over fifty, may I not ask if provision can not be made, better suited, to his tastes habits & age than that, which is furnished in a Colonelcy of Cavalry? Altho' his fidelity & character here would warrant me in pressing his claims if I supposed he desired a change, my chief object is to be with you at least in your thoughts when you meet. I am in pretty good health and not likely to lose it for the want of occupation. I just left Genl Pillows quarters he was writing at his desk and will be able to assume command of the Division in a few days.²

In great haste . . .

FRANK. PIERCE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “By Colo' Moore” on the cover. Postmarked New Orleans, November 24. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received December 1, 1847; “*Private.*”

1. Thomas P. Moore.

2. On the Battle of Chapultepec and Gideon J. Pillow's wound, see letter and notes in Pillow to Polk, December 12, 1847.

TO JAMES G. M. RAMSEY¹

My Dear Sir: Washington City October 30th 1847

I have received your letter of the 19th Instant.² There is no such rank in the Medical Department of the army, as Division or Brigade Surgeon. The only rank know in that corps, who ranks all others is a surgeon General. All others whether of the regular army or the Volunteers are surgeons, and assistant surgeons. The surgeons, rank, when on duty together according to priority of appointment and so of the assistant surgeons. I directed the Secretary of War,³ to forward to you to day, a letter of appointment as surgeon. If you accept you will accompany the Tennessee Regiment of Volunteers, recently called out, to Mexico.⁴

Their destination will be Vera Cruz, and thence to the Head Quarters of the army,⁵ or to such other point in the interior, as may require the presence of a force. The Surgeons & assistant surgeons are appointed at large, and are not required to serve with any particular Regiment or corps, but may be ordered by the Government to any point where their services may be required. If therefore you accept, and on your arrival in Mexico, should indicate, any particular post or point, at which you would desire to serve, there will be every disposition to satisfy your wishes. I was rejoiced to learn from your letter, that you were willing to serve your country, in your capacity as a professional man, and hope you will accept the appointment tendered to you. Your established and eminent standing in your profession, makes it very desirable that the country should avail itself of your services. On reaching the army you would be able to decide at what post or with what corps it would be desirable for you to service. If you should have the desire to resign, you could do so. I have as yet appointed no assistant surgeon, for the reason, that I am at some loss, to know whom I should appoint. The most prominent applicants are *Dr. George W. Simpson* of Dandridge, *Dr. Lyon* & *Dr. Gaines* of Knoxville.⁶ If you accept, it would be better to select the assistant, from some other part of East Tennessee. The *Athens* or *Cleveland* region would be the best location for him: especially as I have appointed *Samuel McClellan*⁷ of Sullivan, to be assistant Quarter Master, and *Robert D. Powel* (son of the late Judge *Powel*)⁸ of Hawkins, to be assistant commissary for the Regiment. If you know any good physician, residing in *McMinn Bradley*, *Hamilton*, *Meigs*, *Rhea*, or in any of the Counties in that Region, who would accept the appointment of assistant surgeon, I would thank you to name him to me. I would like to appoint the son of my old friend *Lyon*,⁹ but fear it would not do, to take the surgeon & assistant surgeon both from one County. This however, might not be, an insuperable objection. *Dr. Simpson* of *Dandridge* is represented to be a good physician and a sound Republican.¹⁰

If contrary to my anxious desire, you should decline to accept, I desire that you will write to me without delay, and name the person whom you think I should appoint in your place. I write in great haste.

With my respectful salutations to *Mrs. Ramsey*¹¹ & your whole household: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Mecklenburg Post Office, Knox County, Tenn., and marked “(Private).”

1. Ramsey (1797–1884) was a Knox County, Tenn., medical writer, railroad promoter, banker, and historian. He was trained in medicine but never practiced. He played a key role in the 1844 presidential campaign by refuting charges that

Ezekiel Polk, Polk's grandfather, had been a Tory during the Revolutionary War. He held numerous positions in private corporations and in government. From 1823 to 1861, he served as postmaster at Mecklenburg, Knox County.

2. Letter not found.

3. William L. Marcy.

4. Polk refers to the Fifth Tennessee Infantry Regiment, raised in East Tennessee and officially received into service in December 1847. On the call for troops that produced it, see letter and notes in Polk to Aaron V. Brown, August 24, 1847.

5. Winfield Scott established the army's headquarters at Mexico City after U.S. forces took that city in September 1847.

6. George W. Simpson, Washington H. Lyon, and James S. Gaines. Simpson (c. 1814–1865?), a Tennessee native, practiced medicine in Dandridge, Tenn. Lyon (1808–78), also a Tennessee native, graduated from the Medical College of the University of Maryland, in Baltimore, in 1835. He practiced in Knoxville. Gaines (1823–53) was born in Eden Ridge, Sullivan County, Tenn. He served as an assistant surgeon, assigned to the Fifth Tennessee, March 3–July 20, 1848. By November 1850 he had moved from Knoxville to Choctaw County, Ala.

7. Samuel G. McClellan, of Sullivan County, Tenn., was appointed a captain and assistant quartermaster on October 30, 1847. He served with the Fifth Tennessee until his discharge on July 20, 1848.

8. Robert D. Powel and Samuel Powel (or Powell). Robert (1825–61), a Rogersville, Hawkins County, Tenn., native and resident, was appointed a captain and assistant quartermaster on October 20, 1847. Assigned to the Fifth Tennessee, he served until August 31, 1848. In 1850 he was working as a lawyer. Samuel (1776–1841), his Pennsylvania-born father, became a Blountville, Tenn., lawyer and law instructor before moving to Rogersville in 1805. He served as a judge on Tennessee's Superior Court of Law and Equity, 1807–9; as a judge on the state's First Circuit Court, 1812–13 and 1819–41; and as a Democratic Republican in the U.S. House, 1815–17. He was involved with the Rogersville *Rail-Road Advocate*, 1831–32.

9. William Lyon (1784–1854), Washington H. Lyon's father, was born in Maryland. In 1809 or 1810 he bought a farm in Knoxville, where his guests included Andrew Jackson. He served as U.S. marshal for the Eastern District of Tennessee, 1829–41. In 1841 Polk, as Tennessee governor, appointed him a commissioner of the Hiwassee Railroad Company.

10. Members of the antebellum Democratic party often referred to themselves as the "Republican party." This usage went back to Thomas Jefferson's Democratic-Republican party, active from the 1790s to the 1820s, which was known as both "Democratic" and "Republican" and from which the Democratic party of Andrew Jackson and Polk, created in the 1820s, often claimed descent. The use of the term for Polk's party faded during the 1850s with the emergence of the Republican party of John C. Frémont and Abraham Lincoln.

11. Margaret Barton Crozier (1802–89), the daughter of Knoxville merchant John Crozier, married James G. M. Ramsey in 1821.

FROM JAMES WALKER¹

Dear Sir/

Nashville Octr 30, 1847

I have been here several days with Mary E.² waiting an opportunity for her to get off to New Orleans. In a conversation with Mr. Bass³ he expressed the opinion decidedly, that the main building of your House was so much damaged by the explosion, that it would be better for you to pull it down & rebuild upon the modern plan. He says that to repair, every thing will have to be new except the walls, and that you might rebuild by letting the present wing stand, a convenient house with 5 rooms to a floor for about the same money it would take to repair the present building & add such improvements, as may be desireable. This matter is worthy of consideration & enquiry. Mr. Stephenson is so much engaged in the Rail road⁴ that he has appointed an agent to attend to his own Nashville property.

The Legislature is engaged in balloting for a U.S. Senator. The result is exceedingly doubtful. Neither end of the state will yield their claims, and without some compromise, (which is not probable) the Whigs cannot elect a Senator. The Democrats have the power of choosing who the Whig shall be. They have not yet shown their hand, but perhaps will to-day. They go in for a man in favor of the Mexican War & the Tariff of '46.⁵ They I think are ready to act in a body, when they can feel certain of electing, the least objectionable Whig. There are more than one that would do, but who they will finally adopt I do not know. Whitesides is in the field, but I think Jo. Williams⁶ would be the most acceptable to our people. Every thing however is exceedingly uncertain.

JAMES WALKER

ALS. Polk Memorial Association, Columbia, Tenn. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 7, 1847.

1. A planter and a successful businessman in Columbia, Tenn., James Walker (1792–1864)—not to be confused with painter James Walker or Capt. James H. Walker—had married Polk's sister Jane Maria in 1813. They lived next door to Jane Knox Polk and (until his 1827 death) Samuel Polk, Jane Maria and James K. Polk's parents. By 1846 Walker was operating a furnace and forge.

2. Mary Eliza Walker (1823–1900), a daughter of James and Jane Maria Polk Walker, married William S. Pickett in 1842. They lived in New Orleans.

3. John M. Bass.

4. The Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad was chartered in 1845, surveyed in 1848, and constructed in 1849–54. Major promoter Vernon K. Stevenson served as its president, 1848–64.

5. Walker Tariff.

6. James A. Whiteside and Joseph L. Williams.

NOVEMBER

TO AARON V. BROWN

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Nov. 1st 1847

On yesterday I received your two letters of the 24th ultimo.¹ On the day before they came to hand (Oct. 30th), I appointed *Dr. J. G. M. Ramsey*² of Knox Co. to be surgeon; and *Samuel G. McClellan* of Sullivan Co. to be assistant Quarter Master, and *Robert D. Powel* of Hawkins Co. to be assistant commissary, to act with the Regiment of Volunteers, lately called from East Tennessee. With your letters I received many others from members of the Legislature and others at Nashville, recommending *Mr White* a member of the Legislature from Hawkins, for one of these appointments.³ You can say to any of the gentlemen who wrote in his behalf, that the appointment had been made before these letters had been received. It was necessary to make the appointments without delay, and the persons selected for asst. Q. Master and asst. commissary, were well recommended by leading citizens in their respective Counties.⁴ It is not positively certain that *Dr. Ramsey* will accept, though he has expressed a desire to go to Mexico, and that he might do so.⁵ I have not yet appointed an assistant surgeon, and would have no hesitation in appointing *Dr. Stewart*,⁶ if he was not a member of the Legislature. Would it be proper to call him from the Legislature and leave his District unrepresented? I doubt this, as well on his own account, as that of the public. If after the Legislature adjourns, a vacancy, should occur in the *Ten Regiments* organized last spring,⁷ I might have it in my power to gratify his wish. This however I cannot promise positively, for I cannot foresee the embarrassments, which may surround me.

I entertain the same high opinion of the military talents of our friend *Genl. Turner*⁸ that you do, and would be pleased to gratify his wishes, but [. . .]⁹ is not now in my power to do so. Indeed there are no Military appointments now in my power except staff officers, for the

new corps of Vol[un]teers, and to fill such vacancies as m[a]y occur during the recess of the Senate.

We have nothing from Mexico, of later date, than what you have noticed in the newspapers.

In haste

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Since writing the above I have rcived a strong recommendation in favour of *Dr. John Parshall* of Athens, who desires to go to Mexico.¹⁰ I know him well. He eminent in his profession, & in all respects a *first rate man*. I shall appoint him assistant surgeon, but doubt whether he will accept, any thing less than the post of principal surgeon. Should *Dr. Ramsey* decline I will appoint him principal surgeon in his place. *Dr. Stewart*, our fried *Ramsey* and all others from that part of East Tennessee, know *Dr. Parshall*. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked “(Private).”

1. Letters not found.

2. James G. M. Ramsey.

3. Letters not found. John F. White (1824–1901), of Rogersville, Tenn., attended Holston College, Newmarket, Tenn., and served as a private in the Mexican War, 1846–47. He represented Hawkins County in the Tennessee House, 1847–49, then became a lawyer.

4. With respect to Powel, Polk refers to Crawford W. Hall et al. to Polk, September 29, 1847. All ten authors were Rogersville residents. Hall (1808–90), a lawyer, served as U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of Tennessee, 1843–44 (until the rejection of his nomination by the Senate) and 1865–69. A Kentucky native, he had served as a navy midshipman, 1826–27.

5. Polk refers to Ramsey’s letter of October 19, 1847, not found, to which the president replied in Polk to Ramsey, October 30, 1847.

6. James H. Stewart (or Stuart) (c. 1817–1860s?), a Polk County, Tenn., physician, served as a county commissioner of revenue, 1845–46, and in the Tennessee House, 1847–49.

7. Polk refers to the results of legislation, commonly known as the Ten Regiment Bill, passed by Congress at his urging in February 1847. It authorized the creation of and funding for ten new army regiments for service in Mexico. It called for the regiments to be disbanded after the Mexican conflict. “An Act to raise for a limited Time an additional military Force, and for other Purposes.” *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 8.

8. Robert B. Turner (1803?–1848), a Nashville lawyer, served simultaneously as treasurer and as adjutant general of Tennessee, 1845–47. He died in June 1848.

9. Text here and below cut off side of page.

TO JAMES G. M. RAMSEY

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Nov. 1st 1847

I wrote you two days ago acknowledging the receipt your letter,¹ and informing you that I had appointed you a surgeon in the army. In that letter I informed you that I desired to select the *assistant surgeon*, from the region of the State, in the vicinity of Athens. This morning a letter has been received from *Hon J. W. Blackwell*² stating that *Dr. John Parshall* of Athens is desirous to go to Mexico with the new Tennessee Regiment. I know *Dr. Parshall* well. He has great eminence as a physician & I have this day directed the Secretary of War³ to appoint him *assistant surgeon*. I doubt whether he will accept any post, less than that of *principal surgeon*. If he does accept, you will have a very learned and able associate. You may not know him. If you do not, it is enough to say, that there is no man in the state, of higher character or professional character. He is with, all a sound Republican. If he accepts the place of assistant, I will promote him, on the happening of the first vacancy in the army, when I can, do so with propriety.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Mecklenburg Post Office, Knox County, Tenn., and marked “(Private).”

1. Ramsey’s letter of October 19 not found.
2. Letter not found. Julius W. Blackwell (c. 1797–1867) was a native of Virginia and a farmer in Athens, Tenn. He represented a Tennessee district as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1839–41 and 1843–45.
3. William L. Marcy.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear sir

[Yalobusha County, Miss.]¹ November 5th 1847

I take the oppitunity of riting you a few lins concerning your plantation An people. Youre people are all well at presente. The season has bin fine sins I rought to you last. For gethering the crop we ar trying to Make use of it. I think I shal Make a far crop it terning out beter than I thort it would of don.

We have had nofrost to doug iny damage yet.

We have packed 62 bags of coten.² I shal mak a far crop of coten & corn & peas & potators some cabage some tobaco for the people. I shal rase a plenty of polk³ for the plantation.

The clothing are all nearly ready.

The stock are all doing will as cold be exspected. Elisabeth has a fumale child. She cauld it Numy.⁴ It was born Oct 18th.

I have nothing mor worth your Attention only Remane

JOHN A MAIRS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received November 18, 1847; “Relates to my private business.”

1. Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

2. Mairs enclosed a list of the weights of cotton bags packed in 1847, numbered 14 to 62. The weights total 24,723 pounds. AD. DLC–JKP.

3. Mairs refers to the plantation’s poke crop.

4. Previously a slave of Joel Childress, Elizabeth (c. 1816–?) was purchased by Polk from Childress’s creditor in 1828. By 1832 Polk had sent her to his Fayette County, Tenn., plantation, where she married a slave from a nearby plantation. In 1835 Polk sent her to his Mississippi plantation, where she married another slave not owned by Polk and where she still lived at Polk’s death. She had at least seven children, four of whom survived childhood. Mairs calls Elizabeth’s newborn daughter “Numy” here and “nauma” in his November 18 letter to Robert Campbell, Jr. She is, however, likely the daughter listed as “Fanny” in the appraisal of Polk’s estate made on December 5, 1849. Mairs reported Fanny’s death in a letter to Sarah Childress Polk of October 8, 1850. (These documents can be found in DLC–JKP.)

FROM JAMES G. M. RAMSEY

Mecklenburg, Knox County, Tenn. November 7, 1847

Ramsey, responding to Polk’s letter of October 30, declines the appointment of army surgeon. Although he “always” has supported Texas annexation and the Mexican War, and would like to contribute to these, his family’s needs prevent him from giving up his two-thousand-dollar income for a position paying less than one thousand. He praises the newly enlisted soldiers whom he saw today in Knoxville.¹

Ramsey recommends, in his place, Thomas Von Albade Anderson,² of Chunky Bend, Jefferson County, or John Parshall, of Athens, Tenn., the latter of whom he wrote today asking if Parshall would accept the appointment. For assistant surgeon he recommends Washington H. Lyon (whom Anderson would prefer) or James S. Gaines (whom Parshall would prefer), both Knoxville Whigs. He was unaware that George W. Simpson was a physician or a Democrat. He knows of no candidate in the Hiwassee District, southwest of Knoxville, but will research “the Lower counties,” to the south.

Ramsey reports that East Tennessee’s ten companies “are full” or “overflowing” and that “Another Regiment could be raised before another month.” He attributes “the martial spirit” to Mexico’s refusal to make peace when the Americans reached Mexico City. The volunteers have “the determination to subdue or exterminate.” Ramsey recently wrote to Nashville recommending that the legislature pass “strong resolutions in favor of the Administration, the prosecution of the war & a sufficient indemnity.”³ He believes that, since

the Whig electoral victories in August, Tennesseans have shifted toward the Democratic party.

In a postscript Ramsey, having learned that the troops dislike Gaines, recommends instead Lyon; Democrat John H. Hawk, of Athens; or Dr. Taylor, of Chattanooga.⁴ He claims that the regiment is two-thirds to three-fourths Democratic and will elect Democratic officers.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 15, 1847. Joseph Knox Walker's AE: "*Answered Nov 26th 1847*" (reply not found).

1. Ramsey refers to the Fifth Tennessee Infantry Regiment; see letter and notes in Polk to Ramsey, October 30, 1847.

2. Anderson (1802–93) was a Jefferson County, Tenn., physician and a former Presbyterian minister. He wrote *Practical Monitor, for the Preservation of Health and the Prevention of Disease* (1831) and edited the *Jonesboro Tennessee Sentinel*, 1840. He was a presidential elector for Polk in 1844. Appointed an agent for the Barrell Land Company in 1848, Anderson moved to Coffee County the next year.

3. The Tennessee legislature did not pass such resolutions, though Sen. James M. Williamson did, on November 27, 1847, introduce a resolution in favor of demanding the inclusion of an indemnity by Mexico in a peace treaty.

4. Dr. Hawk (1818–52), of McMinn County, had been declared insane by July 1851. No Dr. Taylor has been confirmed as living in Chattanooga in 1847. A Dr. R. H. Taylor, however, directed that city's Church Hospital and Foard Hospital during the Civil War. He may have been the Richard H. Taylor who practiced medicine in Memphis and Hot Springs, Ark., after that war.

FROM SETH S. HANCE¹

Honoured Sir,

Baltimore Novem. 8th 1847

Learning through the medium of "the Baltimore Sun,"² of this date, that you were suffering from the effects of a bad cold,³ I have taken the liberty of forwarding to you; a few packages of my Horehound Candy, and a bottle of my Horehound Syrup, both articles of tried, and well known efficacy for the alleviation and cure of the complaint with which you are annoyed. Trusting that you will find them on trial to be all they are represented, I subscribe myself

SETH S. HANCE

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Hampton C. Williams's⁴ AE: "*Answered*" (reply not found).

1. Hance (c. 1817–1884), born in Baltimore, lived in Chile and Ecuador before returning to his native city. In 1840 he became a seller and manufacturer of patent medicines, including the two cold treatments, derived from the horehound plant, that he enclosed to Polk. He was a prominent member of the

Religious Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers. One of the biggest advertisers in the Baltimore *Sun*, he exhibited the spirited self-promotion that drove the patent-medicine industry, an enterprise that advertised both in the new “penny press” newspapers and in signage painted on buildings, and that produced great fortunes for entrepreneurs such as Hance. The industry had its roots in the eighteenth and thrived during the mid-nineteenth century. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, consequent to growing public wariness and government regulations, the industry faced its demise.

2. Arunah S. Abell founded the Baltimore *Sun* in 1837 as a party-independent “penny” newspaper.

3. On November 8, 1847, the *Sun* printed a letter, signed “Mercury” and dated November 7, which reported, “The President to-day is complaining of a severe cold.” The letter also noted Sarah Childress Polk’s “recent indisposition.” According to Polk’s diary entry of November 7, “I was suffering from the effects of a severe cold to-day & did not attend church.” Sarah did attend and Polk made no further mention of either’s illness in his diary.

4. Williams (1806–77), a Democrat from Georgia, held government clerkships under Presidents Andrew Jackson and John Tyler. Under Polk he was appointed a clerk in the Post Office Department in 1845 and in the War Department later that year, then a naval storekeeper in March 1847. Polk often employed him as a clerk at the White House. In February 1847 and August–October 1848—and apparently, given his AE on this letter, at some point in November 1847—Williams filled in as Polk’s private secretary during Joseph Knox Walker’s absences. He later became a Fairfax County, Va., farmer.

FROM COLLIN S. TARPLEY¹

My Dear Sir

Jackson [Miss.]² 8th Novr 1847

The Elections in this State having just closed you will doubtless be surprised to learn that in this Congressional District where there is a majority of 1100 Democrats P. W. Tompkins³ the whig Candidate has beaten the late Representative Col Roberts⁴ about 1000 votes. The District is still Democratic by a large majority but there were many causes combining to produce this result. Mr Tompkins is a Gent of eminent ability and as the Wilmot Proviso is the all absorbing question at the South the people of this District resolved to procure the ablest man they could get to represent them on this question and Mr T. stands pledged not only to oppose the “Wilmot Proviso” but to vote against a Speaker tainted in the least with that heresy. In addition to this he pledged himself to vote supplies for the War to oppose a Bank, distribution internal improvements, to let the Tariff⁵ alone and give to the Sub treasury⁶ a fair trial. This was all that the Democratic party could desire and that he will faithfully carry out his promises I do not entertain the shadow of a doubt. So far as Col Roberts is concerned there

were numerous objections to him 1st his acknowledged want of capacity; 2d his vote against the bill to increase the pay of the Volunteers⁷; 3d his vote of censure on Genl Taylor under Mr Thompsons proviso⁸ and lastly his agency while in the Legislature to vote himself out of debt to the Banks⁹ and his recent purchase of his own note to the Union Bank¹⁰ amounting to \$12000 for \$5.00. Add to this that he had been foisted on the people against their wishes by the McNutt¹¹ & Mississippian clique at Jackson¹² that have become extremely odious to the people and you have the reasons why Roberts was beaten. Not that the District has changed for I believe that the Democratic party is stronger than it ever was before, but the people are sick of caucuses where some three or four men in Jackson claim the privilege of dictating to the people of the whole State Men who for selfish purposes and to keep themselves in Office have disgraced the State with Repudiation Briscoism¹³ and every other species of radicalism that would serve their purposes. The people have become disgusted with these destructive doctrines that would not only disgrace the State but certainly result in revolution and have claimed the privilege of acting for themselves in despite the threats of that Clique to read them out of the party. Had any Democrat run for Congress not allied to that Clique he could have been elected by a heavy Majority as it was the people were compelled to choose a man wholly incapable of serving them efficiently in the present emergency at the dictation of a set of men for whom they entertain a sovrein contempt or to take a talented whig pledged to the support of the Administration upon all the leading questions that may come before the next Congress. Democrat as I am (and you know me to be as true to the cause as any other man) I felt bound in my conscience to sustain Tompkins, and I am pleased to find that a large portion of the party in this District fully concur in my views. McNuttism and Briscoism are defeated and broken down in Missi and henceforth we may look for a policy on the part of our rulers that will not only be in strict accordance with Democratic principles but calculated to sustain the credit and good faith of our State.

C. S. TARPLEY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received November 17, 1847; "Assigns his reasons for voting for a Whig for congress, whih I do not think are sound; Says he is a Democrat."

1. Tarpley (1802–60) was born in Virginia and raised in Tennessee, where he studied law in Polk and Aaron V. Brown's office. In the 1830s he moved to Alabama and then Hinds County, Miss., where he became a prosperous lawyer and major slaveholder. Though a longtime Democrat—in 1846 he briefly campaigned for the U.S. House as a Democrat—the Raleigh *North-Carolina Standard*, June 28, 1848, reported that he was supporting Whig Zachary Taylor for the presidency.

2. State identified through content analysis and from Polk's AE.

3. Patrick W. Tompkins (1804–53), born in Kentucky, became a lawyer there and, from the late 1830s, in Vicksburg, Miss. He served in the Mississippi House, 1841–43. Tompkins won the election discussed in this letter, serving as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1847–49.

4. Robert W. Roberts.

5. Walker Tariff.

6. Independent Treasury.

7. Tarpley may refer to either of two votes. On May 20, 1846, a resolution was offered in the U.S. House to increase volunteers' pay from seven to ten dollars per month and to award 160 acres of land to each soldier who served until the Mexican War's end and the family of each soldier who died. Roberts voted, with the majority, against suspending the rules and receiving the resolution. On June 12, 1846, a bill was offered in the House to increase the pay of soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and musicians in the regular, volunteer, and militia forces serving the United States during the war by two dollars per month. Representatives again voted not to suspend the rules and allow the bill to be introduced. The *Congressional Globe* does not record their individual votes. On January 27, 1847, however, Roberts voted in favor of a bill to increase the same men's pay by three dollars per month and to award them or their families 80 or 160 acres, depending on their time in the service. The House passed that bill but the Senate never voted on it.

8. Tarpley refers to Congress's joint resolution of thanks to the officers and soldiers at Monterrey. The version that originally passed the House on January 30, 1847, included a proviso, introduced by Jacob Thompson, denying congressional approval of the capitulation that Zachary Taylor had accepted from Gen. Pedro de Ampudia y Grimarest. Roberts voted to add the proviso and, most likely, to pass the amended resolution (the *Congressional Globe* does not record individual votes on its passage). The proviso, however, provoked opposition in the Senate. In the end both houses passed a version of the resolution that made no mention of the capitulation. Polk signed it on March 2. "Resolutions giving the Thanks of Congress to Major-General Taylor, and the Officers and Men under his Command, in the late Military Operations at Monterey." *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Number 5. Thompson (1810–85) taught at the University of North Carolina, 1831–32, before starting a law practice in Pontotoc, Miss., in 1835 and representing a Mississippi district as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1839–51. He served as secretary of the interior under President Buchanan, 1857–61, and as Confederate governor of Mississippi, 1862–64.

9. The repudiation of bonds was a major political issue in Mississippi in the 1840s, one that divided Democrats. In the 1830s the state had issued seven million dollars in bonds to support the state-chartered Planters' Bank and Mississippi Union Bank. Both banks soon failed. In 1842 the legislature repudiated the bonds for the Mississippi Union Bank; it took no action either to redeem for payment or to repudiate those for the Planters' Bank. Roberts, a state legislator who owed money to the Mississippi Union Bank, supported repudiation. Some accused him of adopting that position to avoid having to pay his debt. Mississippi later, in 1848, redeemed some of the Planters' Bank bonds;

following a referendum in 1852, however, it repudiated the rest. A new state constitution in 1875 further repudiated both banks' bonds.

10. The Mississippi Union Bank was chartered by the state in 1837–38 and based at Jackson with branches elsewhere. It failed in the early 1840s, unable in 1840 to make legally required payments of specie.

11. Alexander G. McNutt (1801 or 1802–1848), born in Virginia, moved in the 1820s to Jackson and then to Vicksburg, Miss., where he became a lawyer. A Democrat, he was elected to the Mississippi Senate in 1835 and as its Speaker in 1837. He was governor, 1838–42. As governor he advocated the revocation of charters to failed banks and the repudiation of bonds. In 1847 he was an unsuccessful candidate for the U.S. Senate.

12. A convention of delegates from Mississippi's Third Congressional District, meeting in Jackson on June 8, 1847, nominated Roberts for reelection to the U.S. House. He had originally been nominated in 1843 by the Mississippi Democratic State Convention, held in Jackson on July 10–11, only after the supporters of paying the state bonds bolted, leaving the repudiators to make nominations alone.

13. Parmenas Briscoe (1784?–1850), born in Kentucky or Virginia, commanded a Mississippi Territory militia company in the War of 1812 and the Creek War of 1813–14. He became a Claiborne County planter and a militia general. He served in the Mississippi House, 1828–29 and 1842–43, and Senate, 1830–31, 1835, and 1844–48. A Democrat, he ran for governor in 1843. He appears to have moved to Jefferson County in 1848. A repudiator, Brisco sponsored a bill in 1843 to revoke the charters of banks that violated them and to cancel all debts owed them. The Briscoe Bill passed after being amended to cancel the latter provision. It remained a heated topic in Mississippi politics. (The legislature amended the law in 1846, providing for the sale of closed banks' property and debt owed them but outlining methods for the banks' debtors to pay off their debts before the sale or within two years. The state supreme court, in March 1847, struck down much of the 1846 law.)

FROM GEORGE WATTERSTON¹

Sir,

Washington Novr. 9th 1847

I have the honor to send you, herewith, two copies of the large lithographed design of the Washington Monument; the one framed & the other without a frame,² which is intended for your own use. The Board of Managers would be obliged to you, if you would cause the former to be hung up in some conspicuous part of the Presidents House,³ where it may be seen by those who visit the building.

GEO. WATTERSTON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received November 12, 1847.

1. Watterston (1783–1854), a New York City–born lawyer and a veteran of the War of 1812, was the first librarian of Congress, 1815–29. His many books include *A New Guide to Washington* (1842). Watterston served as secretary of the Washington National Monument Society from its founding in 1833 until his death. The society collected donations and, by 1846, had selected Robert Mills’s design for a monument to George Washington. Polk, as president of the United States, served as *ex officio* president of the society.

2. Enclosures not found.

3. Built between 1792 and 1800, the president’s residence went by several names in the nineteenth century. In Polk’s time it was known officially as the Executive Mansion and unofficially as the White House or, occasionally, the President’s House or President’s Mansion. It was located then, as now, at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

FROM GEORGE M. DALLAS¹

My Dear Sir,

[Philadelphia]² 11. Nov. ’47

The enclosed original letter from Lord Howden³ has been sent from Paris for my inspection by my friend Francis P. Corbin.⁴ Its contents seem worthy of Mr. Buchanan’s notice. I submit it confidentially to yourself and him: only requesting that it may be returned to me at your earliest convenience.

G. M. DALLAS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received November 1847.

1. Dallas (1792–1864) was Polk’s vice president. A Philadelphia Democrat, he held various offices in Pennsylvania before serving in the U.S. Senate, 1831–33; as minister to Russia, 1837–39; as vice president, 1845–49; and as minister to the United Kingdom, 1856–61. Early in 1844 Dallas followed the lead of Robert J. Walker in advocating the annexation of Texas. Dallas County, Tex., in 1846—and possibly the town of Dallas, in 1842—was named for him.

2. Probable place identified from other correspondence and through external research.

3. Letter not found. Born in Dublin, John Hobart Carodoc, Lord Howden, (1799–1873) became a lieutenant general in the British army. He succeeded his father as second baron in 1839 and served as British minister to Brazil, 1847–50, and to Spain, 1850–58.

4. Corbin (1801–76), a Virginia-born lawyer, businessman, and racehorse owner, lived in Philadelphia and Paris. He and his wife owned plantations in Georgia and Louisiana.

TO WILLIAM G. ALLEN¹

Dear Sir:

Washington City November 15th 1847

*Mr Hill*² has presented to me in your name a *Hickory Cane*,³ which you had intrusted to his care, together with your letter of August 28th⁴ which accompanied it. I accept it with pleasure and thank you for it. I will preserve it, as a tribute of respect voluntarily offered by a man, far advanced in years, who feels, as I am sure, from the perusal of your letter you do, a deep interest in the welfare of our beloved country.

Sincerely sympathizing with you, in the bereavement you have recently suffered in the death of your patriotic son,⁵ I am gratified to learn from you that you bear it with christian resignation, and that you derive some consolation from the reflection, that he met his melancholy fate in his country's service.

Thanking you for this manifestation of your personal regard, and for the approbation you have been pleased to express of the measures of my administration: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Culpeper Court House, Va.

1. William G. Allen (1780?–1849), a Culpeper County, Va., farmer and slaveholder, belonged to the Fairfax Masonic Lodge. He may, in the 1810s, have practiced law; in 1838 he was county crier, charged with making legal announcements.

2. Polk's diary makes no mention of this meeting with "*Mr Hill*." The reference may, possibly, be to Hiram Hill, John Hill, or Hugh L. W. Hill. Hiram (1800?–1879 or 1880), a Fayette Courthouse, Va. (now West Virginia), farmer and Democrat, represented Fayette and Nicholas Counties in the Virginia House, 1846–48. In 1844 he was chairman of the local Democratic Association; in 1848 he was a state commissioner to oversee the selection of presidential electors. By late 1849 he had become a state proxy for the Giles, Fayette and Kanawha Turnpike Company. John (1800–1880), born in New Canton, Va., was admitted to the bar in 1821 and became a Buckingham County lawyer. He served as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1839–41. Hugh (1810–92), a Warren County, Tenn., farmer and Democrat, served in the Tennessee House, 1837–43, and the U.S. House, 1847–49; he did not seek renomination in 1848. The diary does mention a meeting with Hugh on November 29, 1847.

3. Andrew Jackson's troops, during the War of 1812, gave him the nickname "Old Hickory"; he seemed to them as tough as that wood. Polk, as Jackson's protégé, became known as "Young Hickory" during the presidential campaign of 1844.

4. Letter not found.

5. William G. Allen's son may have been William T. Allen (c. 1824–1845). Born in Hampton, Va., he graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1845.

Thereafter a resident of Williamsburg, Va., he served as a brevet second lieutenant in the Second Dragoon Regiment from July 1 until his death, attributed to pleurisy with symptoms of typhoid, at Corpus Christi, Tex., on December 6.

FROM SARAH ANGELICA SINGLETON VAN BUREN¹

Dear Mr Polk

Fifth Avenue New York. Novr. 15th/47

The hope to which the kind note of the Paymaster Gen.² gave rise, of the immediate return of my beloved husband,³ has been dissipated today by a letter from him. He writes me that he does not propose to quit his post in Mexico, till he is ordered to some station in this vicinity though the Commander in chief⁴ had kindly proposed to him—feeling much solicitude on account of the state of his health that he should return with the Train which was to set out the following day. Overwhelmed with disappointment, I venture to appeal to you, to ask whether I may indulge the hope that such a transfer may be effected, as I would shape my course accordingly. Could you know the wretchedness the last seventeen months of separation have cost me, I am satisfied you would counsel me, were I your daughter, to induce my husband to resign—the more so, that apparently there is no promotion in his Department. I believe all the officers on Genl. Taylor's Staff at Monterey, but Majr Kirby⁵ & himself, were Brevetted.

If I have taken too great a liberty in addressing you, dear Mr Polk, (it is to Mr Polk, & not the *President* to whom I write) on this subject, I trust you will excuse it, when you consider how entirely my happiness is at stake, & that I have no one within reach, to consult upon the propriety of the step—while such promptness of action is necessary, to preserve the life perhaps, of one so beloved—so excellent in every relation of life. Do me the favor to present my compliments to Mrs Polk.

ANGELICA VAN BUREN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Sarah Angelica Singleton (1818–78), known as Angelica, was a daughter of a South Carolina cotton planter. Educated at Madame Grelaud's Seminary, Philadelphia, she was introduced to Martin Van Buren in 1837 by her cousin Dolley Payne Todd Madison and married to his son Abraham the next year. Because President Van Buren's wife had died in 1819, she served as hostess at the Executive Mansion, 1839–41. Afterward she and Abraham lived with Martin in Kinderhook, N.Y., before moving to New York City in 1848.

2. Maryland native Nathan Towson (1784–1854), a captain of artillery during the War of 1812, received two brevet promotions for gallantry during that war. He was appointed paymaster general of the army in 1819, earned a brevet promotion to brigadier general in 1834, and received another to major general in 1849 for his service during the Mexican War.

3. Abraham (or Abram) Van Buren (1807–73), Martin's eldest son, was born in Kinderhook and graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1827. He served in the army until becoming President Van Buren's private secretary, 1837–41, then rejoined in June 1846 as a major and paymaster. He served on the staffs of Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott during the Mexican War and was brevetted lieutenant colonel in 1848, effective August 1847, for gallantry at Contreras and Churubusco. Abraham did not at this time receive the transfer solicited by Angelica, but he was posted at New York City after the war. He served until 1854.

4. General-in-Chief Winfield Scott.

5. Edmund Kirby (1794–1849), of Connecticut, had served in the army since joining as an ensign in 1812. Appointed a major and paymaster in 1824, he was brevetted lieutenant colonel simultaneously with Abraham Van Buren and then brevetted colonel effective September 1847. Like Abraham, he served on Taylor's and Scott's staffs during the Mexican War.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

My dear Sir,

London. 18 Nov. [1847]¹ 5. P.M.

I must write to you though but a word to express how much Mrs Bancroft² & I have been grieved to hear of your serious illness.³ I trust the frosts of November have restored your vigor. The policy of this country is looking with more & more friendliness towards the United States. Though you annex all Mexico, England will not trouble herself much about it. The kindly disposition has for the last year been steadily on the increase; and I do not think it likely to be impaired. The valor of our soldiers in Mexico has raised our character throughout Europe.

You will find among the matters for Buchanan today, evidence of my zeal to advance the interests of your administration. If we can succeed in abolishing the remaining restrictions on trade, we shall accomplish a result that will mark your administration. I have been aided in conducting this discussion by the experience I had of old as collector of Boston, little thinking that my study of the Navigation Laws⁴ at that day would ever be of such service in another position.

I congratulate on the great & miraculous success of our arms in Mexico. An honorable peace would still, doubtless be the best, but if Mexico will not have it, then our duty is manifest to hold the country and await the counsels of futurity. England wishes us peace & has no great at least no serious objections to our getting good terms. It is becoming a fashion, rather, to expect the absorption of all Mexico.

This ministry⁵ we have now great reason to wish should stand. They will encounter immense opposition. Finances are disordered; business stagnant; Ireland starving & anarchical.⁶ Every thing is ominous of serious struggles. The repeal of the Navigation Laws will be most

vigorously resisted. Perhaps you will allude to the subject generally in the message, like the Queen.⁷ Let me before closing add, that Sardinia, Tuscany & Rome are on the point of completing a Customs-Union,⁸ dreadful to Austria.

I beg my best regards to my great & good friend Mrs Polk.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS, press copy. MHi. Probably addressed to Washington City. Published in *LLGB*, pp. 27–29.

1. Year identified through content analysis.

2. George Bancroft married widow Elizabeth Davis Bliss (1803–86), his second wife, in 1838. Born into the Davises, a prominent family of Massachusetts Whigs, she in 1825 had married her first husband, Massachusetts attorney Alexander Bliss, who died in 1827.

3. See letter and notes in Thomas J. Read to Polk, October 11, 1847.

4. Navigation Acts.

5. Bancroft refers to the Whig ministry of Lord John Russell.

6. On the famine and political resistance in Ireland, see letters and notes in Bancroft to Polk, October 18, 1847, and John McKeon et al. to Polk, September 11, 1847.

7. The constitutional monarch Victoria (1819–1901) reigned as Queen of the United Kingdom, 1837–1901. Her speech at the opening of Parliament, January 19, 1847, as published in the *London Gazette*, January 22, began with a discussion of the potato famine and government efforts to alleviate suffering in Ireland. Although she did not mention the Navigation Acts or the Corn Laws by name, she urged Parliament “to take into your serious consideration whether, by increasing for a limited period the facilities for importing corn from foreign countries, and by the admission of sugar more freely into breweries and distilleries, the supply of food may be beneficially augmented.” Polk did not discuss these British laws in his Third Annual Message to Congress.

8. On November 3, 1847, representatives of the Papal States, the Kingdom of Sardinia, and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany signed the Customs League Treaty. The signatories invited the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and the Duchy of Modena to join the customs union it created, but their rulers declined. The three members of the customs union then drafted a plan for a political union with the pope as president, but that plan never came to fruition.

FROM THOMAS H. BENTON

Dear Sir: C Street [Washington City],¹ Sunday Nov. 21. 1847

I think it right to inform You in advance, and before events shall develop it, that I cannot take the place of chairman of military affairs in the Senate at the approaching session,² in consequence of *my opinion* of Mr. Marcy’s conduct in all that relates to the trial of Col. Fremont, and its accessory circumstances.³ The first days of the session will develop

this inability, on my part, to fill my accustomed situation; and although I shall make no public allusion to the cause, yet the fact of declining a place so long held will excite so much inquiry that, to avoid great misconstruction, the true cause will have to come out. When I refused to be chairman of the Committee of Finance, I was able to put the refusal upon the practice of the Senate (which did not permit any one Senator to be Chairman of two standing committees) and my great preference for that on military affairs.⁴ In this case, I can give no such reason; and to avoid the appearance of a breach with the administration, I shall be obliged to let it be known where the difficulty lies.

This information, and at this time, I think to be due to You—due under any circumstances, but especially the present, when misapprehension would be so easy.

[THOMAS H. BENTON]

L, copy, in Washington Curran Whitthorne's hand. DLC-MVB. Marked "Private." From Polk's diary: received evening of November 22, 1847.

1. City identified through content analysis.

2. Benton had chaired the Committee on Military Affairs from 1827 to 1841 and since 1845. He returned to the chairmanship in May 1848 and held it until 1849.

3. In a memoir and history written decades later, Benton accuses William L. Marcy's War Department of having replaced Stephen W. Kearny's single court-martial charge against John C. Frémont with three charges, including mutiny. He attributes his leaving the committee chairmanship to his desire no longer to interact with that department. [Benton], *Thirty Years' View; or, A History of the Working American Government for Thirty Years, from 1820 to 1850*. . . . vol. 2 (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1883), pp. 716–17. See also letter and notes in Marcy to Polk, October 25, 1847.

4. Benton likely refers to assignments of committee chairmen in 1845. The *New York Herald* speculated on December 6 of that year that he wished to chair the Committee on Finance. With Benton's support, however, John C. Calhoun received that chairmanship.

FROM AMOS KENDALL¹

My Dear Sir [Washington City]² Monday Night Nov. 22d '47

I return your manuscript with the results of my own labors,³ being obliged to leave the City tomorrow morning.

Of such vast importance is the subject and so little time have I had to devote to it, that I have more than once profoundly regretted that I took it in hand. I have not been able to study it at all and have confined myself to your materials changing somewhat the order of the argument and adding such views as occurred to me.

Your argument deduced from the purchase of ground for light houses &c strikes me as unsound. The *power to build* “needful buildings” seems to me scarcely deducible from the power to buy land &c.⁴ But the facts collected by you are very important in another place to show how careful Congress was not to fix itself upon the soil of the States for any purpose whatever without acquiring the property and jurisdiction according to the terms of the constitution.

I will call on you upon my return from New York, probably on Saturday next.

AMOS KENDALL

[P.S.] Mr. Kendall will hand the Books⁵ to a servant if sent for them.⁶

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed “Present”; probably delivered by hand; marked “(Private.)” on the cover. From Polk’s AE: received November 22, 1847.

1. Kendall (1789–1869), born in Massachusetts, moved to Kentucky in 1814. There he became a tutor for Henry Clay’s family, a lawyer, Georgetown postmaster, and editor of the Georgetown *Argus*. Appointed by Pres. Andrew Jackson, he served as fourth auditor of the Treasury, 1829–35, and postmaster general, 1835–40. Remaining in Washington City, he became, in 1845, telegraph inventor Samuel F. B. Morse’s business agent and founding president of the Magnetic Telegraph Company.

2. Place identified through content analysis.

3. Polk had refused to sign the Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill of 1847, which the House had passed on February 20 and the Senate on March 3. This pocket veto had invalidated the bill, which would have funded improvements for harbors and rivers, but on December 15 the president sent his reasons to Congress. Kendall herein enclosed a draft of that message with Kendall’s suggested changes. D, draft, in Kendall’s hand with emendations in Polk’s hand. DLC–JKP. From Polk’s AE to the draft: “Draft made from mine . . . ; Some of the suggestions in this Draft were incorporated in my Message to the Ho. Repts. Decr. 15th 1847; Many of the suggestions were omitted.” See the final message in *CMPP*–4, pp. 610–26. In 1846 Polk had vetoed a similar bill.

4. The draft quotes the Constitution’s requirement (Article I, Section 8) that states approve Congress’s purchase of land on which to construct “needful buildings” for military purposes. To permit Congress to take land without states’ consent for building roads and canals—constructions “of immeasurably less importance”—it concludes, “is not to be conceived.” The draft also observes that until the 1820s, complying with the Constitution, Congress had left the improvement of harbors and rivers to the states. Congress “did not even assume the power to erect light-houses or build piers without first purchasing the ground with the consent of the States” (after receiving the draft from Kendall, Polk added at the end of this sentence, “and, obtaining jurisdiction over it”). Polk retained both these passages in the final message.

5. Kendall probably had borrowed books that Polk had consulted while drafting the message. Given that the message discusses several federal and

state bills, those borrowed books may have included legislative proceedings or statute books. They also may have included specific works that Polk cites in the margins of two other drafts of the message (including the first draft, written in summer 1847): “Madison Papers—Vol. 3”; “Executive Documents Ho. Repts. Doc. 127. 1st Sess. 27th Congress”; “American State Papers Vol. 7”; “Southern Review”; “No. 44. of The Federalist”; and “North Carolina Hospital Acts.” AD, draft, in Polk’s and Washington Curran Whitthorne’s hands, and AD, fragment of draft. DLC—JKP.

6. Kendall wrote his postscript to the left of his signature.

FROM THOMAS P. MOORE

My dear Sir

Fifty Miles below N Orleans, Nov 23d 47

In accordance with my promise to Genl¹ It was my purpose to have proceeded, by the quickest route to Washington, but a kick from a Mule still hurts me considerably, & the delay of *my* personal explanations of much not contained in Genls’ letters² for a few days; now that congress has met can do no harm. I shall proceed up the river³ but *direct* to W City. Having per formed the duty I owe you—I shall leave W City as soon as practicable. We met Butler & Marshall⁴ at Vera Cruz, the latter a cripple & in that climate permanently so. We did not in our descent see a hostile Mexican, & an adequate force will effectually prevent another attempt to resist us. The *good* portion of the Mexicans desire the permanent occupation of the country.

I write this illegible scrawl to give it & its accompaniments⁵ an early *start*. I know you will comprehend every thing without further explanation.

T P MOORE

[P.S.] I met Maj Polk.⁶ He was well.⁷

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked “Private.”

1. The general whose name Moore omitted was probably Gideon J. Pillow. The issue at hand was probably an attempt to attain a peace treaty with Mexico through bribery. In June 1847 President Santa Anna, through British intermediaries, notified Winfield Scott and Nicholas P. Trist, then at Puebla, that he would induce the Mexican Congress to support peace if the Americans halted their progress toward Mexico City, paid Mexico’s government ten thousand dollars, and paid another million after the conclusion or ratification of the treaty. Scott and Trist agreed, and Scott convinced Pillow to support the plan. On July 12 or 14 Trist paid the ten thousand. On July 16 or 17 Scott explained the plan to Gens. George Cadwalader, John A. Quitman, James Shields, David E. Twiggs, and Pillow (Gen. Persifor F. Smith left Puebla before this meeting but, according to Pillow’s later statement, earlier expressed his approval).

The assembled generals were divided, with Pillow again giving his approbation. The next morning, however, concerned about public reactions to the plan, Pillow urged Trist to cancel it. Trist declined but, in the end, it came to nothing: the Americans soon learned of Santa Anna's failure to convince legislators to open negotiations. According to Polk's diary entry of December 18, the president learned of the plan from an unsigned letter of August 6 to the *St. Louis Republican* (reprinted in the *Washington Niles' National Register* of December 4); from Pillow's letter of October 28, not found; and from recent conversation with Moore and Timothy P. Andrews. Polk directed James Buchanan to write to Trist "expressing the disapprobation of the Government & requiring an explanation." In March 1848 Polk directed the court of inquiry created to evaluate accusations among Pillow and other army officers in Mexico also to investigate this failed peace effort.

2. Moore probably refers chiefly to Pillow to Polk, October 28, 1847, not found.

3. Moore presumably refers to the Mississippi River.

4. William O. Butler and Thomas Marshall.

5. Enclosures not found.

6. William H. Polk.

7. Moore wrote his postscript in the left margin.

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir.

City of Mexico Novr. [23rd]¹ 1847²

I have this day, forwarded to the Secretary of War, a communication relative to the proceedings of the court of Inquiry in my case, *appealing* from the decision of the General-in-chief.³ You will see, from an examination of the record, how utterly groundless is the attempt to reflect upon me. I beg you to give the subject your *personal* attention and examination.

Since I wrote you last, a most *remarcable order* has issued from General Head Quarters of this army. I enclose you herewith *one* of the printed *copies*.⁴ You will perceive that it originates from the *letters* written to the states by *officers* of the Army. The General is not content in this order, to denounce the *letters* themselves, and *their authors*, but goes so far as to designate certain *papers* in which they appeared,⁵ and charges the *authorship* of the letters upon the *officers* who are mentioned in those letters, with a degree of *malignaty, unparralled, and unwarranted* by any principle of military usages.

By thus designating the *news papers*, and charging the *authorship* of the letters, upon "*the principal Heroes of these scandalous letters,*" and by thus *invoking* "*the indignation of the officers of the army*" he has laid aside all regard for *decency*, and used his official station & influence as General-in-chief of the army, to *break down* the authority and

influence of those officers with their respective commands, and sought to destroy their characters, and render them as odious as possible with the army.

An order so *pointed & personal*, so *scandalous & malignant*, in abuse of *his power* and *military usage*, is an outrage of the rights of the army, and of the *officers*, thus *assailed*. Nay more, it is equivalent to a *trial* and *condemnation* of those officers, without the *forms* of *trial*, without the *right of defence*, and without the *slightest proof* to warrant the charge. It goes upon the principle of first *imputing* the *charge* of *crime*, then *hanging the accused without trial*, without allowing him any opportunity of *proving his innocence*. It is the principle (carried into practice) upon which the Blood-hounds of the French Revolution, disposes of the victims of their *malice*.⁶

If tolerated by the Government, it is time for all honourable officers to quit the service. An officer's character and reputation, is more endangered from these *assassin-like* attacks than would be his life, in the most deadly conflicts with the enemy; and though I have as little fear of danger as most men, I fear these malignant assaults, as I do the assassin's knife. Against such insidious assaults, made by the General-in-chief, an officer has no means of defense. His hands are *tied*, his pen is *paralyzed* & his *voice* is stifled by the rules of military discipline & subordination. He is *accused* and *condemned, unheard*. In addition to these *revolting violations* of the *rights* of officers, (who have committed no crime, against whom not a shadow of proof exists) the inevitable consequence and affect of the order is, to destroy good order and subordination in the army, by *breaking down* the authority of the officers thus denounced, with their own *proper commands*, and to produce *factions*, & "*Coteries*"⁷ in the army, utterly subversive of good order and military discipline.

I presume the annals of military usage, will present no similar outrage upon the *rights* of the *service*. I venture to assert that none such can be found, in the history of *our country*.

Such an act of injustice upon the rights of officers, such an *atrocious* violation of military usage & law, could only be tolerated in a military despotism, where *law* was *unknown*, and *rights disregarded*.

I pray you therfor my Dear Sir, in justice to as Gallant an army as ever shed its blood, in justice to your own enduring fame, to a Commander-in-chief of the american army, in justice to your brilliant and glorious administration as chief magistrate of the Nation, in justice to the outraged rights of unoffending officers, *rescind* the *offensive & obnoxious* portions of this order, and do not suffer the Archives of the Government *defiled* by *such* an order, remaining *unnoticed*.

I have said thus much about this *order*, & its affects and tendencies, upon general principles & military usage, without reference to the *persons* or *officers*, whose *authority* as thus attempted to be destroyed with their own proper commands, and whose character is thus *fouly aspersed* by the General-in-chief of this army. But how much more *aggravated* do these violations of good order & military usage become, when it is known that the officers thus assailed, were the two officers, *highest* in rank and command now with this army, next to the General-in-chief, and the *only two* having the rank & command of major General's. What other affect can be produced by such an order, than *discord*, *faction*, "*Coteries*" and universal disgust & dissatisfaction throughout the army. Genl Worth⁸ and myself command nearly two thirds of the army. His hostility towards me you know, and its cause. He is as bitter towards Worth as myself and adopts this mode of gratify his *malice* and *private hate*.

We both addressed him respectful letters, desiring to be informed, Whether or not he intended, (as we believe was most evidently his intention) to *designate us* in this order: He refuses to make any *direct charge*; but would not *disclaim* the application of an order which was so *pointed* as not to be misunderstood by any body in the army. I send you a copy of the correspondence, that you may see its character.⁹

Since the issuance of the order Col. Duncan,¹⁰ has avowed the authorship of the letters which related to Genl. Worth, and acquits Worth of all knowledge of the transaction.

Genl. Scott has arrested Col. Duncan, and will apply to you for a court martial for his trial.¹¹ Duncan is as gallant and popular an officer as there is in this army, and as the proof is all Documentary (consisting of his letters and his written acknowledgement of the *authorship*) has applied to Genl. Scott to be ordered home for trial; but Genl. Scott has refused to permit him to go.

The feelings of the army are outraged by this order & are strongly with Duncan.

The Practice of *letter-writing* is a great nuisance as all admit, and if Genl. Scott had issued an order at Vera Cruz and notified the army of his purpose, it would have been well enough, and the army would then have known how to shape its course; but it so happened that all the letters at that time, & for some time afterwards, *praised* and *glorified* Scott himself. As long as that was the case, he did *not see* its *evils*. Now however, the character of these letters, having greatly changed, the practice is *frought with evils*, & has so much excited his indignation that he has almost gone *crazy*, and has issued an order which meets with universal execration, and is a disgrace to the army. Genl. Worth

has charges drawn up against him about this order, & will forward them to the Govt. by the same conveyance which carries this.¹²

Since I commenced this letter, I have received of Genl. Scott a letter of which I send you a copy mark A. placing me *in arrest*.¹³ You will perceive that my letter to the Secretary of War (in which he says my letter is *disrespectful* and contemptuous to him, and my having sent a copy directly to the Secretary of War under paragraph 296¹⁴) constitute my offence. The copy intended for the Secretary of War which I proposed to send *direct* had not *in fact* left my own possession. The original letter constituting my appeal was sent through him Scott, & I deemed proper to send the copy *directly*, to guard against the *hazards of transmission*, and so advised him by percript¹⁵ to the original placed in his hands. I send you copy also of a letter addressed to Genl. Scott to day.¹⁶

It is expected that he will arrest Genl. Worth for preferring charges against him. Worth will send in his charges tomorrow. They relate to the infamous order above referred. I do not myself believe he will *dare do so*, but things have arrived at such a *pass*, and he has become so *outrageous & furious*, that no one knows what will come next. Nothing was further from my expectation than this *arrest*. My letter to the Secretary of War is *severe*, but *temperate*. It is addressed to the *Govt* and was only *passed through* him, as the *channel of communication*, and I deny that I have in that committed any violation of any *principle of Regulations*,¹⁷ or of the *rules and articles of war*.¹⁸ I have a *right to appeal to my Govt*, and though I might, if I exceeded the latitude allowed me of *freely and fully examining* his conduct & *errors* in my communication—the Govt. *might censure* me, or Genl Scott might claim of the Govt that, in the case supposed, it should censure me or punish me, yet it must be manifest that he cannot *stifle* an examination of his own *official conduct*, where he is the mere *channel of communication*, by arresting me for a *supposed* disrespect in such official paper to the Govt.

If this practice were allowed, it must result inevitably in *defeating all appeals to the Govt* and placing out of the power of an *oppressed & injured officer*, ever to have any redress from the Govt., and against the *arbitrary and Despotic* conduct in a General-in-chief, or other officer, there would be *no remedy*; for in all such cases, the officer could, (no matter what the character of his conduct) arrest the officer for *disrespect*, (though *only so in his own judgement*) and thus crush the *officer* and *stifle his complaints*, and *arbitrarily place* the Govt. itself, in position to see its officers *oppressed* and crushed, without its having it in its power to protect them.

Surely in a Govt. of laws, no such construction will be *adopted*, and no such oppressive and Tyranical course *tolerated*. If so, then am I *mistaken* in the *security and protection* which the laws of the Govt affords

its citizens and soldiers, and in the *restrictions* placed by law, upon the *arbitrary power* of those entrusted with authority, as well as in the *responsibility* attaching to *its abuse*.

I do therefore most earnestly *protest* against this *arbitrary power*, and *this abuse of authority*, as a violation of *rights* and *law*, oppressive and Tyrannical, and as an *abuse of authority* utterly at variance with every principle of *constitutional rights*, as well as of *military usage*.

I therefore most earnestly invoke the immediate interposition of the Govt. of my country to protect me against the present *unlawful arrest*, and against any similar act of oppression *in future*. The doctrine *maintained* and *act upon* by the General-in-chief in this arrest, is that of his personal *infallibility*, and of *disrespect* and *crime, to question it*. It is the principle avowed in the constitutions of those monarchy's where they maintain that the "*King can do no wrong*."¹⁹ It is utterly at variance with every *sentiment* of right, every principle of *justice*, of liberty, & free Govt.

If a General-in-chief of an army, may thus abuse his *power*, and attempt to stifle an investigation into his conduct from the *watchful care* & protecting authority of Govt., and may thus arbitrarily *deprive its officers* of all right of appeal, by suspending that authority and command conferred upon them by the Govt., and placing them in *duress* & *prison*, for the exercise of a right of appeal from an *august* and *erroneous* decision, it was for no purpose that our *forefathers* shed their blood to throw off a Tyrannical Govt. All the checks and guarantees contained in *Magna charter*, the *Great charter* of our *liberties*,²⁰ are, but a *dead letter*. Suppose all I have said in my letter to the secretary of war *is true*. Is it *disrespectful* to the General to write the truth to the Govt., and to send that *truth* through the proper channel? Has not the Govt. a right to know the *truth* in regard to the conduct of its officers? In a foreign country, far distant from that Govt., supposing the General-in-chief, *chooses* to consider the *truth* uttered of himself, *disrespectful*, if he for *this disrespect*, may *punish* the *appellant*, has he not an *equal right*, to *withhold* from Govt. or to suppress altogether the very *appeal itself*?

First. I maintain that the statements in that letter are all *true*, & that the *truths*, are told in *respectful language*.

Secondly. I deny that he has any Right *in law* or military usage, *to apply* to an *official paper* to the Govt. the *6 Article of War*.²¹ That article was *applied* & *conferred in its meaning*, to *contemptuous* and *disrespectful behaviour towards* another. It cannot be tortured into an application to a case such as this.

I therefore *Protest* against my arrest as *illegal*—*arbitrary* and *oppressive*.

You will perceive that the whole case, & the charges against me, are & must necessarily be *documentary*. Against this arrest I have no remedy, & can get no relief until the Govt. could be heard from. I suppose if the Govt. shall see that the arrest is *illegal* & the charges *frivolous* and *malicious*, it would order my release immediately, and have me restored to my command at once. I do not *desire* that course to be taken; but if the Govt. shall order a court, there are now *11 General officers* & *6 Colonels* in the United States, while there are scarcely half the number of *General officers here*. By the time your order could reach here detailing a court, a portion of the army will have gone to *Queretaro* & probably a portion to some other place, as Genl Scott has determined to occupy the interior cities with all the forces he can spare. This will necessarily remove some of the officers of rank whom you may detail for that duty, and produce great delay & as well as inconvenience to the service. After the trial the proceedings would have to go to Washington city & return before the result could be known, during which time I must remain *under arrest*. This will be at least & under the most favorable circumstances 6 months.

I therefore desire you to order me home for trial and would be glad to have the court convened at as early a period as possible that I may at once be tried and restored to my command.

In addition to these considerations of public character which I think *are weighty* & strong, I do not believe I could have justice done me if tried here where the *court* & *all the witnesses* (if such be chose to introduce as what is disrespect &c), are under Genl Scott's immediate *eye* & *power*.

He is known by the whole army, to be *vindictive* and *Tyrannical* in the *extreme*, and every body fear him & *cower* under him. You may judge from the record of the court of Inquiry, what sort of justice I may expect at his hands and also from his present oppressive course and violation of my rights. I want therefore, if you order any court to be ordered to the United States for Trial.

The same reasons exist in Duncan case, only not in so strong a degree. We can do nothing during these long 6 months. We could return to duty in half the time if ordered home for trial, & could in the mean time, visit our families, & give some little attention to my private business which has been greatly deranged and neglected. I shall as soon as I am released prefer charges against Genl. Scott, in substance the same as Worth, with an additional one for his illegal conduct in arresting me &c.²² If tried & acquitted or censured You must be satisfied that I cannot

return here if Scott remains in command of the army. He will have to be recalled any how to meet Worth's charges and I hope you will therefore order us both home *at once*, and will authorize me having my witnesses, embracing my staff & a few others, who may become material in regard to the case of the court of Inquiry. At all events my staff should be allowed to go with me. It is due to curtesy & the settled usages of the service. If left to Genl. Scott he will not allow it.

You will see that in his letter arresting me, Genl. Scott says he will prefer charges against me about "*other*" cause. I presume he has reference (if to anything) to the *letters* in the newspapers, referred to in his famous order. If such charges are preferred, it will be simply to make his *charges stick* so as to get a *court martial* ordered, for I cannot believe he has any expectation of my being tried. His object is to *injure me* and to annoy me as much as possible by *5 months arrest*.

In regard to the *letters* he cannot connect me with them without he proves a *lie*. Secondly if he could, even if I had written them it is no *offence which* can be punished, because that provision of Regulations²³ is clearly and manifestly in violation of the constitution & the bill of rights.²⁴ Congress itself has no power to prohibit a man or officer from writing the truth about *any thing & every thing*. The paragraph being a mere regulation issued by order of *the executive* & in violation of *law is void*. If he should prefer charges therefore against me about that thing also, it is no argument against not ordering me home for trial, for it could only require the *author* of the Letter to be summoned, who is here supposed to be Majr Burns,²⁵ paymaster.

I must therefore my Dear Sir honestly request you to dispatch orders immediately either for my release, or that I shall be ordered home for trial & I ask the same thing for Duncan whose *Sin* is that he is a Devoted Democrat, & not one of S—'s²⁶ worshippers. He arrests him while he allows 100 cases right under his nose to pass unnoticed. If I am retained here, I do not believe I will be tried during the war; Scott, to make his punishment the greater, would make no effort to get the court together. Instead of sending the copy, which I had *intinded* sending to the secretary of war, & for preparing which is a part of my offence, I enclose it to you as a *private paper* for your information, only sending the original through Genl. Scott.

You can readily conceive my state of suspense and anxiety, and the horrible state of my imprisonment. I trust you will therefore act in regard to it as *early as possible*. My reasons & suggestions & application are all *private* and intended for your information, but as you will be in possession of the *official order of Genl. Scott's*, and of his *order of arrest* & a copy of my communication, all the information necessary to

your giving the proper directions will be before you, and can act without mailing the tardy *transmission* of Scott's application & C. Don't appoint the officers whom he *may select & suggest*, for I know enough upon the subject of his feelings, to fear a "*packed court*."²⁷

There is no guarantee of an impartial trial & of justice except in a trial at home, removed from the *factions* of this army, & the sources of his improper influences & from his tools.

Novr. 27th 1847. Since writing the foregoing Scott has arrested Worth also, for preferring charges against him.²⁸ This is getting along pretty well. We will have to place old decreped Col. Clark²⁹ in command of Worth's fine Division. Pierce³⁰ is coming home. Cadwalader³¹ will be in command of mine, & the highest officer left to command either of my brigades, will be Lt. Colonels.

Scott's order was scandalous, & would have disgraced us as it was intended if we had quietly submitted to it. And then because we, resorted to a *legal* mode of *redress*, (for we have been guilty of nothing insubordinate or illegal) we are arrested & the army striped of Genl. officers. We were perhaps the most prominent in service, certainly even rank, & because we were thought by our friends to be entitled to some little merit—we are *denounced*—without proof—condemned without trial. A party bias cannot now be given to the controversy. Worth has more character & popularity with the Whig party at home than Scott, two to one. Worth is his Protegee.

The Taylor Whigs will help to *kill him*. Worth's friends & Whig press will join heartily—Duncan's too—& the Democracy *en mass*. His follies, *blunders* & orders & outrageous conduct place him perfectly in your power. Your hands are *untied*. You can do as you please with him, for he is a "dead cock in the Pot." He will be so utterly dead when you take hold of him that the largest galvanic battery could produce no signs of vitality.³² The nation will see him sink without a murmur or regret. He has destroyed all the harmony of the army, thus its officers divided out into factions which are almost as bitter as they are towards the common enemy. He has poisoned the atmosphere around him & spread it through the army until all are affected more or less & taken sides. He keeps a dirty sheet, (to print his orders as is said) but in point of fact, to abuse all who will not worship him.³³ His printed orders must cost the Govt. at least \$10,000 pr annum, instead of writing them as his staff should do.

I am rejoiced that the *issue is thus* formed, that you are disembarassed, and are left free to exercise your own judgment. For his abusive & disrespectful letters to the Secretary of War which he has read to

many officers of the army³⁴—for his fatal delusion in the armistice³⁵—for his infamous order 349—for his *illigal* arrest of my self & Worth, for any and all these causes, he should be recalled & made to account before the proper tribunal & country.

It is due alike to the justice, to the honour of the army, to the injury & insult to the oppressed officer, and the interest of the service, that he should be *severally rebuked* by the Govt. And now since the change is made in *the issue*, and since you are *relieved* by it from any embarrassment, I feel that you can, if in your judgment it would be proper, at once, order the *arrested officers* restored to their commands, which the interest of the service so much requires; While the redoubtable would be, "*field marshall*,"³⁶ is relieved from duty, & a command, he has shewn himself so unfit to command.

I shall await your action with great anxiety. If the circumstances & cause of my arrest should be misrepresented in the public press, I would be glad to have the matter set right, by such reference to these records as may be proper.

GID J. PILLOW

ALS. DLC–JKP. On cover archived with this letter: addressed to Polk at Washington City and marked "*Private & Confidential*." On cover archived with enclosed Pillow–Henry L. Scott correspondence, possibly an outer cover for everything: addressed to Joseph Knox Walker at Washington City; processed at Veracruz by Reynolds (likely Robert B. Reynolds); postmarked New Orleans, December 29; from Polk's AE, received January 1848.

1. Pillow erroneously wrote "24th." Correct date identified through analysis of content and enclosures.

2. Concluding section of letter is dated November 27, 1847.

3. After the U.S. victory at Chapultepec (September 13, 1847), two captured Mexican howitzers were found in Pillow's personal wagon. General-in-Chief Winfield Scott accused Pillow of having taken the guns as trophies. A court of inquiry held on October 23–27 blamed subordinate officers for taking the weapons but censured Pillow for permitting their being left in the wagon and brought to Mexico City. On November 15 Pillow wrote to War Secretary William L. Marcy. Noting that he had ordered his subordinates to remove the howitzers from his wagon the day they were discovered, Pillow asked that the government "remove the censure . . . , and . . . refer the case back to the Court." ALS, copy. DLC–JKP. Later in this letter to Polk, Pillow reports his decision to enclose the letter to Marcy herein for Polk's reading instead of sending it to Marcy. Pillow enclosed with the letter to Marcy his letter of November 2 to Henry L. Scott informing Winfield Scott that the court's report incorrectly stated that Pillow's subordinates had told him they had not removed the howitzers and asking General Scott to refer the case back to the court for correction. He also enclosed Henry L. Scott's reply of November 6, through

which Winfield Scott denied the request. ALS, copy, and L, copy, in Pillow's hand. DLC–JKP. In April 1848 Polk overruled the court's censure of Pillow. Henry L. Scott (1814–86), born in North Carolina, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy and entered the Fourth Infantry Regiment in 1833; he earned the rank of captain in February 1847 and that of brevet lieutenant colonel for gallantry at Chapultepec in September. He was aide-de-camp, 1842–48, and chief of staff, 1847–48, to Winfield Scott, his father-in-law. He resigned in 1862.

4. Enclosure not found. Pillow refers to, and in the next paragraph paraphrases from, General Orders, No. 349. Issued at Mexico City on November 12, 1847, by Henry L. Scott on behalf of Winfield Scott, the order accuses unnamed officers of having authored or solicited letters that praised them in a New Orleans and a Tampico, Mexico, newspaper. It charges these and other officers, fewer than six in number, with "pruriency of fame, *not* earned." Senate Executive Document No. 65, 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 455. The first letter, signed "Leonidas" and dated August 27 at Mixcoac, Mexico, emphasizes Pillow's and minimizes Winfield Scott's role in the August 20 Battles of Contreras and Churubusco. Pillow initially had submitted it with his signature to New Orleans *Delta* editor James L. Freamer; after its rejection Archibald W. Burns edited it and resubmitted it under the pseudonym. It was published in the *Daily Delta* on September 10 and, with additional (possibly sarcastic) passages praising Pillow, in the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* and *New-Orleans Commercial Bulletin* on September 16 and the Mexico City *Daily American Star* on October 23. The other letter, anonymous and dated August 27 at Tacubaya, Mexico, appeared in the *Pittsburgh Post* of September 25 and was reprinted in papers including the *Daily Picayune* of October 8 and the Tampico *Sentinel*. It praises William J. Worth's and James Duncan's military contributions between Puebla and Churubusco. Duncan claimed authorship of the so-called "Tampico letter" in a November 13 letter to the Philadelphia *North American* and *United States Gazette* published therein on December 28. (Similar letters followed, including one signed "Veritas" and dated September 27 at Mexico City. That letter appeared in the Washington *Daily Union* on October 23 and subsequently in other papers. It effusively praises Pillow's actions at Contreras, Churubusco, Molino del Rey, and Chapultepec.)

5. The New Orleans *Delta*, with daily and weekly editions, was established in 1845 by former staff members of that city's *Picayune* as a competitor to that paper. James R. Barnard and William Jewell issued the Tampico *Sentinel*, a weekly English-language newspaper, in that U.S.-controlled Mexican city in 1847.

6. Pillow presumably refers to the Reign of Terror. During that stage of the French Revolution, 1793–94, the new French leaders authorized the arrest of those whom they perceived as enemies without specific charges. They imprisoned half a million people and sentenced over sixteen thousand to the guillotine after trial. Including deaths in prison, executions without trial, and the crushing of a rebellion, over a quarter million people died.

7. General Orders, No. 349, describes the prurient officers as all members of "the same two coteries."

8. William J. Worth (1794–1849), after working as a merchant in Hudson and Albany, N.Y., joined the army in 1813. He served as commandant of cadets

at the U.S. Military Academy, 1820–28, and served in the Second Seminole War. In the Mexican War he commanded troops at Monterrey, Veracruz, and Mexico City. He earned brevets to brigadier general in 1842 and to major general at Monterrey in September 1846.

9. Worth to Henry L. Scott, November 13, 1847; Henry L. Scott to Worth, November 14, 1847 (two such letters); Worth to Henry L. Scott, November 14, 1847 (two such letters). Ls, copies. Pillow to Henry L. Scott, November 14, 1847. ALS, copy. Henry L. Scott to Pillow, November 15, 1847. L, copy, in Pillow's hand. DLC–JKP. Henry L. Scott, in his replies to Worth and Pillow, reports that Winfield Scott has no positive knowledge of the authors' identities but, if he obtains such knowledge, will court-martial the authors for lying in the letters and for publishing them against military regulations.

10. James Duncan (1810, 1811, or 1814–1849), a career army officer from New York, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1834 and taught mathematics there in 1835. In 1846 he was promoted to captain and earned brevets to major, lieutenant colonel, and colonel. In 1849 he was made colonel and inspector general. He commanded forces at Mexican War battles including those at Monterrey, Churubusco, Molino del Rey, Chapultepec, and Mexico City.

11. Duncan was arrested due to his admitting authorship of the Tampico letter.

12. Worth charged Winfield Scott with falsely accusing him of writing or soliciting the Tampico letter and with issuing General Orders, No. 349, in order to ruin his reputation and undermine his military authority. He asked that Polk study the matter but did “not urge present action” because of the need for officers to remain at their posts in Mexico. Worth to Marcy, November 1847. LS, copy, in Balie Peyton's hand. DLC–JKP.

13. Winfield Scott, through Henry L. Scott, ordered Pillow arrested and confined to Mexico City for writing “officially” on November 15 directly to Marcy instead of writing through General Scott, for waiting a week to send General Scott a copy of the letter, “& for the contempt and disrespect” to General Scott in the letter. General Scott promised later to detail “charges and specifications against” Pillow “on the foregoing grounds, and others,” and to ask Polk for a court-martial. Henry L. Scott to Pillow, November 22, 1847. L, copy, in Pillow's hand. DLC–JKP. (This copy is not marked “A.”)

14. Pillow cites paragraph 296 of *General Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1847* (Washington, D.C.: J. & G. S. Gideon, 1847), p. 58. Part of article 31, this paragraph stipulated that, if an officer applies to his commander “for redress of supposed grievances inflicted by a superior,” the commander must either “order an investigation” or “give his reasons in writing for declining to act; these reasons, if not satisfactory, the complaining party may . . . forward to the next common superior, together with a copy of his application for redress.”

15. Pillow probably meant to write “prescript.”

16. In his reply to the letter announcing his arrest, Pillow corrects a minor error in his letter to Marcy and notes that he sent the original to Winfield Scott and plans to send a copy to Marcy, not vice versa as Winfield Scott and Henry L. Scott seem to believe. Pillow to Henry L. Scott, November 23, 1847. ALS, copy. DLC–JKP. Pillow also enclosed, with this letter to Polk, Henry L.

Scott's reply to Pillow of November 23. That reply affirms that Winfield Scott will forward to Marcy Pillow's letter to the war secretary and Pillow's most recent letter to Henry L. Scott. L, copy, in Pillow's hand. DLC—JKP.

17. *General Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1847.*

18. In 1806 Congress passed 101 articles, known as the Articles of War, to govern the army's conduct. "An Act for establishing Rules and Articles for the government of the Armies of the United States." *SL*, 9th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 20.

19. Although this sentence was long part of British common law and appeared in print earlier, its best-known appearance is in Sir William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, book 1, chapter 7 (1765).

20. Pillow presumably refers to the U.S. Constitution.

21. Article of War 6 read, "Any officer or soldier who shall behave himself with contempt or disrespect towards his commanding officer, shall be punished according to the nature of the offence, by the judgment of a court martial."

22. Pillow's charges against Winfield Scott did not reach the War Department until April 17, 1848.

23. The charges by Winfield Scott regarding published letters were premised on paragraph 292, in article 30, of *General Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1847*, p. 57. This paragraph forbade "Private letters or reports, relative to military marches and operations," and stipulated that "any officer found guilty of making such report for publication, without special permission, or of placing the writing beyond his control, so that it finds its way to the press, within one month after the termination of the campaign to which it relates, shall be dismissed from the service." Polk, through General Orders, No. 3, on January 28, 1847, had directed this paragraph's reinsertion into the *General Regulations* after its earlier removal.

24. The first ten amendments to the Constitution, proposed by Congress in 1789 and ratified by the states in 1791, came to be known as the Bill of Rights. They place limits on the federal government, protecting rights of individual Americans. Pillow refers chiefly to the first amendment, which protects "the freedom of speech, . . . of the press; . . . and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

25. Archibald W. Burns (c. 1807 or c. 1824–1860s?), a Burlington, N.J., bank cashier and Democrat, was an additional paymaster of volunteers, 1846–49. He served as Burlington mayor, 1855–57.

26. Pillow may refer both to Satan and to Winfield Scott.

27. The use of "packed" for a court appointed to obtain a particular verdict goes back to the sixteenth century.

28. Worth was arrested on November 25.

29. Newman S. Clarke (c. 1793–1860), born in Connecticut and appointed from Vermont, joined the army as an ensign in 1812 and attained the rank of colonel in 1846. He was brevetted brigadier general for his service at Veracruz in March 1847. Thereafter he commanded one of Worth's brigades at Churubusco, Chapultepec, and Mexico City.

30. Franklin Pierce.

31. George Cadwalader.

32. Opening quotation mark missing.

33. "Dirty sheet" was a derogatory term for a newspaper. Pillow probably refers to the *Daily American Star*, an English- and Spanish-language paper published by John H. Peoples and James R. Barnard, soldiers under Winfield Scott's command, and circulated among U.S. troops and Mexican civilians. First issued every other day in April 1847 at Jalapa, the *American Star* moved with the army to Puebla and then Mexico City and became a daily. It was published until May 1848.

34. Congress printed correspondence between Winfield Scott and Marcy in House Executive Documents Nos. 56, 59, and 60, 30th Congress, 1st Session. For an extract from Scott's dispatch of June 4, 1847, in which the general cites "the total want of support & sympathy on the part of the war department" and requests "to be recalled from this army the moment it will be safe for any person to embark at Vera Cruz," see Marcy to Polk, June 26, 1847.

35. Armistice of Tacubaya.

36. The rank of field marshal, in some European countries, represented the army's senior officer. It has never been used in the U.S. Army. The New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, however, on October 7, 1847, recommended it as a new rank for Winfield Scott.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Nov. 24th 1847

Learning from your letter of the 14th of September, that it would not be in your power to visit my plantation, during the ensuing winter, I have written to *Mr J. T. Leigh* Esqr. whose plantation adjoins mine, and requested him, to attend to the settlement of my accounts with *Mr Marrs* at the end of the present year. I have written also to *Mr Marrs*.¹ I am not able to inform them, what amount of *Harry's* hire is yet due, and who are the debtors,² and have to request that you will write to *Mr Marrs* & forward to him, such notes or other evidences of the debts, as may enable him, to collect the three debts. I request also that you will write to me a statement of the amt. due for his hire.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

1. Polk to John T. Leigh, November 24, 1847; Polk to John A. Mairs, November 24, 1847.

2. Polk often had difficulty obtaining payment from the men in Carrollton, Miss., to whom he hired out Long Harry. Some of their identities, of which Polk was unaware, are unknown. Extant sources indicate that Harry's recent employers—and thus possible debtors to Polk—included a Whig named Kimbrough, who hired Harry in 1844; William F. Richards, B. Penticost, E. W. Myers, and

Samuel Hart, who hired him in early 1845; and John E. Hammons, who hired him later in 1845, possibly into 1846, and probably first in 1840. In January 1847 Harry appears to have been hired to a new employer. Five Carroll County men named Kimbrough appear in U.S. and Mississippi censuses between 1840 and 1850: merchant's clerk Joseph H., farmer M. D., merchant Ormond L., farmer Thomas T., and carpenter William A. Kimbrough. Richards (c. 1810–early 1870s), born in North Carolina, had moved to Carroll County by 1840. There he was a slaveholding farmer. Tennessee native Hart (c. 1814–1880s or 1890s?), a slaveholding merchant, was appointed postmaster at Carrollton in 1838. He was Carroll County probate clerk in 1844 and again elected to that post in November 1847.

TO JOHN T. LEIGH

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Nov. 24th 1847

My agent *Col. Campbell* informs me that it will be out of his power to visit my plantation and attend to my business at the end of the present year, as I had expected he would do.¹ I have therefore to request that you will do me the favour, if it shall not subject you to too much inconvenience, to settle up the accounts of the plantation, with my overseer,² at the end of the year, including his own wages. You are authorized to draw on me at sight payable at this City, or at two days after sight, payable at either New York[,]³ Philadelphia or Baltimore, for whatever amou[nt] may be required, to effect these objects. Eastern exchange is always in demand by the merchants and there will I presume be no difficulty in cashing such a draft, perhaps at a small premium. All I wish you to do, is to settle with *Mr Marris* up to the 1st of January next so as to pay off all accounts against me, and if you can cash a draft on me, to pay them all off, including his own wages for this year. I have written a letter to *Mr Marris* to day, which I have requested him to shew to you. It will explain my business with him in part. If he collects the hire for *Harry's*⁴ services or any part of it, it will reduce by that amount the sum for which you will draw on me. *Col. Campbell* writes me that he has employed *Mr Marris* for the next year, and has agreed to give him \$500. for his services. With this I am satisfied.

After I saw you⁵ I received a letter from *Mr James Brown* of Oxford, informing me that, he had compromised the two suits, which *Mr Rayburn* had brought for, a part of my land sold for the taxes, and had paid him the \$25. which you had stipulated to pay.⁶ You can appropriate the \$25. which I handed to you, to aid in building the church in the neighbourhood, for the benefit of my people, concerning which, your neighbour *Mr Lockridge* wrote to me.⁷

I dislike my Dear Sir: to trouble you with business exclusively my own, but know of no one else to whom I could apply, to do me the favour I ask.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Yalobusha County, Miss.

1. Robert Campbell, Jr., to Polk, September 14, 1847.
2. Reference is to John A. Mairs, whose surname Polk misspells in this letter and elsewhere as “*Marrs*.”
3. Text here and below either absent or illegible due to a light ink transfer.
4. Long Harry.
5. Polk probably refers to Leigh’s visit to the White House on September 11, 1847.
6. Letter not found. References are to James Brown and John K. Rayburn. Brown (c. 1795–1870s?), a son of Joseph Brown, of Maury County, Tenn., assisted Samuel Polk, the president’s father, in surveying properties in western Tennessee. During the early 1830s James Brown lived in Jackson, Miss., and had a business partnership with James Walker of Tennessee. During the 1840s he managed James K. Polk’s real estate holdings in Mississippi.
7. Andrew Lockridge to Polk, July 21, 1847.

TO JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear Sir:

Washington City Nov. 24th 1847

I have received your letter of the 5th Inst. I wish you to write to me as soon as my cotton is shipped from *Troy* to *New Orleans*. My agent *Col. Campbell* writes to me, that it will be impossible for him to visit the plantation at the end of the present year. He writes to me also that he had employed you to remain on the place, next year, and had agreed to pay you *five hundred dollars* for your services for that year.¹ You have managed my business well & I am satisfied, to pay you the increased wages which he has agreed to give. At the end of the present year I wish all the accounts of the plantation settled, and as *Col. Campbell* cannot probably be present to settle them with you, I have written to your neighbour *J. T. Leigh Esqr* requesting him to do so.² He will be authorized to settle all the accounts and to pay you, your wages for this year. In my last letter I informed you that I wished you to bring my blacksmith *Harry* home at the end of this year.³ I still wish you to do so. I requested *Pickett Perkins & Co.* some weeks ago to send up a set of blacksmith’s tools.⁴ If they should not arrive at *Troy* before the 1st of January, you can either hire *Harry* out by the month, or employ him in preparing a shop, on the plantation, as you may think best, until they arrive. If *Harry* can obtain work to do, so as to be profitably employed,

I wish you to put one of my young boys, in the shop with him, to learn the trade. I think it probable that the boy *Fan*,⁵ would do better than any other, but of this you will be the judge. *Harry's* hire is unpaid for a year or two past, and I wish you to collect it, if you can, when you go to Carrollton for him. I will write to *Col. Campbell* to forward to you the amount of his hire which is due and who owes it.

You must continue to write to me on [the]⁶ first of every month, and give me an account, of the state of things on the place. I wish you to shew this letter to *Mr Leigh* who will I have no doubt give you his advice, whenever you are at a loss to know what to do concerning my business.

I wish you at the end of the year, to forward to me the statement of the quantity of cotton-bagging and other articles which you may need for the next year, and I will direct them to be forwarded to you at *Troy* from New Orleans.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. You must be particular in returning all my lands, for taxes hereafter, so as to have no more sales of them for taxes. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Yalobusha County, Miss.

1. Robert Campbell, Jr., to Polk, September 14, 1847.

2. Polk to John T. Leigh, November 24, 1847.

3. Polk to Mairs, September 3, 1847. Reference is to Long Harry.

4. Letter not found.

5. Fan (c. 1828–1848 or 1849?) was a son of Chloe and Chunky Jack. Polk purchased him and his family from William H. Polk in 1838 (minus Jack, whom Polk had sold, on William's behalf, in 1834). Under both owners they worked on the Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation. Mairs, as Polk here suggests, assigned Fan to work with Long Harry as a blacksmith for several months beginning by February 1848 and again beginning around July. The estate inventory taken after Polk's death does not list Fan, suggesting that he had died or been sold.

6. Word uncertain, light ink transfer.

TO PICKETT, PERKINS & CO.

Gentlemen:

Washington City Nov. 24th 1847

I have directed, my manager in Mississippi, to forward my crop of cotton for the present year, to your house.¹ I request that you will advise me, of its receipt at New Orleans. I do not desire to sell at present, but request that you will hold it, until you [. . .]² receive further instructions from me. I desire, that you will, have it insured against fire, while in

store, and also against the dangers of the River, in its transportation from *Troy* on the Yalobusha to New Orleans.³

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to New Orleans.

1. Polk to John A. Mairs, September 3, 1847.
2. Word illegible, light ink transfer.
3. Polk refers to the route from Troy, Miss., to New Orleans via the Yalobusha, Yazoo, and Mississippi Rivers.

FROM JAMES BROOKS¹

Sir New York Express (newspaper) office, Nov 30h/47

Although a Whig Editor, nevertheless, I do not wish to see the President's Message butchered in print, and this is the cause of my writing you.

The Press here, ours among them will receive your Message by Telegraph, for which we have made a contract.² It will come mutilated, disjointed, & full of errors. It will be the only copy in the New York papers, & their Extras, the day on which it is delivered; and in our Packet ships *on that day will go to all Europe as the real President's Message*. I should be sorry to see the President thus mis-represented there, or disgraced by the inevitable blunder of the Telegraph in hurrying on to New York so long a document, the morning of its delivery.

To prevent this, you have only one recourse—and that is, to trust by your Private Secretary,³ or some other trust-worthy person six or ten official copies to the Post Master or Collector here,⁴ *under seal*, to be opened when the Telegraph announces a delivery in Washington. Under your own seal nobody can betray your confidence, or break it but by Telegraphic order.

Last year, we thus Telegraphed & murdered Gov. Young's Message,⁵ which he never ceased to regret, as thereby he was misprinted all over the Union. We shall do the same by yours, if you permit, but as an American, I have thus felt it my duty to inform you of facts of which you may be ignorant, or about which there may be inattention among the officials.

JAMES BROOKS

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City. Published in Victor Rosewater, *History of Coöperative News-Gathering in the United States* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1930), p. 42.

1. Born in Portland, Maine, Brooks (1810–73) taught school and studied law before becoming the *Portland Advertiser's* Washington City correspondent

in 1832. He served in the Maine House, 1835. In 1836 Brooks moved to New York City and founded the New York *Express*, a Whig newspaper; he remained its editor-in-chief until his death. He served in the New York House, 1848; as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1849–53; and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1863–66 and 1867–73.

2. Polk's presidency coincided with the rise of the telegraph as a major means of communication in the United States. Telegraphic service between Baltimore and Washington City began in 1844 and the first significant public event reported via the then-new medium was Polk's presidential nomination in Baltimore that year. In 1845 the Magnetic Telegraph Company (also known as the New York and Washington Telegraph Company) was founded under Pres. Amos Kendall, telegraph inventor Samuel F. B. Morse's business agent. It first operated a line from New York City to Philadelphia and Wilmington, Del. After completing its line from Wilmington to Baltimore, the company established telegraphic service, in February 1846, between New York and the nation's capital. Benjamin B. French became president in July 1847. Beginning in 1846 the *Express* and other New York City newspapers jointly contracted with the company to receive a single dispatch from Washington City, whose cost and contents they shared (a consortium of Philadelphia papers picked up the dispatch on the way and paid a portion of the cost).

3. Joseph Knox Walker.

4. Robert H. Morris and Cornelius W. Lawrence. Lawrence (1791–1861) was customs collector at New York City, 1845–49. A merchant and longtime president of the Bank of the State of New York, he had served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1833–34, and as mayor of New York City, 1834–37.

5. John Young (1802–52), born in Vermont and raised in Conesus, N.Y., became a Geneseo, N.Y., lawyer. He served in the New York House, 1833 and 1844–45; in the U.S. House, 1836–37 and 1841–43; and as governor, 1847–49. Early on a Democrat, he switched to the Anti-Masonic and then, before entering Congress, the Whig party. He was a delegate to the Whig National Convention of 1848. He sent his First Annual Message to the Legislature on January 5, 1847.

FROM GEORGE C. DE KAY¹

New York 30th Nov 1847

In view of the fact that various parties seem anxious to make political capital out of the recent voyage of the *Macedonian*² I would respectfully suggest that some notice of it should be taken in the forthcoming message, if not already done.

It is believed that an immense number of foreign and of our own liberal votes will be influenced by the question whether this great national measure *originated* with the Whigs or Democrats. The former claim that the other ship commanded & officered by Whigs being first off &c, gives the *whole* credit to them.³ A line in the message recommending an appropriation to pay the expenses of the ship (though it might prevent

my being repaid) by which means the “*incidental fact*” of *my* having taken the lead might be mentioned would secure to our party the credit of *originating* the measure.⁴

GEO. C. DE KAY

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*Private.*” From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received December 8, 1847.

1. A native of New York and a sailor from an early age, De Kay (1802–49) became a high-ranking officer in the Argentine navy in the 1820s. In the early 1830s he sailed to the Mediterranean and the Middle East before returning to the United States. As this letter indicates, he was a Democrat.

2. In early 1847 Congress debated measures to provide relief for victims of the potato famine in Ireland and Scotland. Much discussion focused on the use of public funds to defray costs for the shipping of foodstuffs provided by private charities. De Kay successfully petitioned Congress to place two naval ships, the *Jamestown* and the *Macedonian*, into civilian hands—the latter captained by De Kay—to bring privately donated supplies to the afflicted countries. Polk signed the joint resolution on March 3. “A Resolution authorizing the employment of the United States Ships *Macedonian* and *Jamestown* in transporting Provisions for the famishing Poor of Ireland and Scotland.” *SL*, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, Number 10. The first naval frigate named *Macedonian* was captured by the U.S. Navy from the British in 1812. The second, build in the 1830s from the keel of the first, was part of the navy’s West India Squadron and then, until 1847, its Africa Squadron.

3. Robert B. Forbes commanded the *Jamestown*, which left Boston for Ireland on March 28, 1847. Unlike the *Macedonian*, it did not continue to Scotland. Forbes (1804–89), a sea captain and a Boston merchant, began sailing to China in the 1810s and by the 1840s owned a fleet of ships trading among North America, South America, Europe, and Asia.

4. Polk received this letter the day after he had submitted his Third Annual Message to Congress. That message included only a brief mention of the potato famine relief: “From our abundance we have been enabled to perform the pleasing duty of furnishing food for the starving millions of less favored countries.”

DECEMBER

FROM DANIEL T. JENKS

My Dear Custom House. Phila. December 3rd 1847

Three or four days ago, one of the Custom House officers¹ called on me, to subscribe to help pay the expences of the Dallas meeting in the Museum.² I objected & said that they were in too much of a hurry; That by this *movement*, among the Custom House officers, It looked as if we were dissatisfied with Mr Polk & his Administration; That this *subject* should be left to the people, & that by the custom House officers moving in this matter at so early a day (particularly as the nomination was in all probability to go over to the 4th of July),³ it was calculated to hurt the cause; I further said, that the people yet might demand Mr Polks services again, as they did in the case of Gen. Jackson a second time. On looking over the proceedings I find they passed no resolutions either in favour of your Administration or your course in relation to the War. Knowing that the whole expence of this meeting was paid by your office holders, I thought it but right to send you this.

This premature movement can result in no good. It will tend to breed bad feelings, & may eventually bring about the same divisions in this State, as now exists in the State of New York⁴; At all events the Custom House officers ought not to be *leaders & prompters* of meetings in favour, of a particular candidate, for '48; they should not attempt to lead the public mind.

All meetings of this kind, injure your Administration particularly, when they do not notice it in their proceedings, especially too, when the Whigs are every where *assailing* your Administration; The officers under the Government, should not abandon it and become the supporters of a candidate for the succession in '48. It takes away a portion of the influence that justly belongs to you, and gives it to the Vice President. I repeat with great respect, that these movements of the office holders, is

a very injudicious one in my opinion, and ought to be arrested at once. In haste: . . .

DANIEL T JENKS

P.S. I was in hopes that by this time to seen the appointment of appraisers. I reccommended what I thought was best. Mr Whitacer⁵ is a first rate man. You know I belong to no clique and would not reccommend no one to you but what was well qualified. If the appointment is not made before congress meets we shall not have but one appraiser⁶ for a length of time. If left till congress meets, he cant take his place untill confirmed by the Senate an[d]⁷ sometimes [i]t don't act for some time. D.T.J.

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "Private." From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received December 17, 1847. Polk's AE: "War meeting at Phild."

1. The Philadelphia Customs House employed about one hundred officers, excluding clerks and other low-ranking staff.

2. Philadelphia County Democrats, on December 1, 1847, held a meeting in support of George M. Dallas's election as president in Philadelphia's Chinese Museum. Attendees proposed work on Dallas's behalf in every state but vowed to support the Democratic National Convention's nominee. The museum displayed Chinese artwork, objects, and models of people and buildings; it sometimes was used as a meeting or performance venue. Initially run by Nathan Dunn, 1838–41, it was reopened as the Great Chinese Museum by John Peters, Jr., in May 1847, though he had relocated the business to New York City by 1849.

3. Jenks refers to the Democratic National Convention, May 22–26, 1848, at which the party would nominate candidates for president and vice president.

4. New York's Democratic party, in the 1840s, was divided into two factions: the Barnburners, whose leaders included Martin Van Buren and his son John, and the Old Hunkers, whose leaders included William L. Marcy and Edwin Croswell. The Old Hunker faction attained a majority at the Democratic state convention in Syracuse, September 29–October 3, 1847, nominating candidates for state office and rejecting endorsement of the Wilmot Proviso, which the Barnburner faction supported. In response, the Barnburners held their own convention, though they did not nominate candidates, at Herkimer on October 26.

5. Jenks recommends William B. Whitecar to replace the late Charles F. Breuil as appraiser for the port of Philadelphia. Whitecar (1805–88), born in New Jersey, became a Philadelphia tailor in the 1830s. Initially a Democrat, he became a Whig during Martin Van Buren's administration, then returned to the Democratic party in 1844. He was appointed to the Philadelphia County Board of Health in 1838 and served as assistant appraiser at Philadelphia, 1842–45, but did not win the appointment for which Jenks recommended him. Polk instead nominated, and the Senate approved, Thomas Stewart in March 1848.

6. Breuil's death left Benjamin E. Carpenter as the only appraiser at Philadelphia. A native of that city, Carpenter (c. 1790–1869) was a grocer in the 1810s and a leader of railroad and loan companies in the 1830s. A Democrat, he

was appointed navy agent in 1837, assistant appraiser in 1838, and appraiser in 1845, serving in that last role until 1849. He also served on the Philadelphia County Board of Health, 1842–52.

7. Letter inserted here and below to complete probable meanings.

FROM THOMAS RITCHIE

[Washington City]

My Dear Sir/

Saturday Morning [December 4, 1847]¹

I did not read the Message—in fact, could not, owing to Mr. Turney—with as much care as I wished and intended. But one or two doubts strike me, on thinking it over, which may have arisen from this very cause.

I mentioned to you the ultimatum terms of a Treaty, which you would sign. How far did *that* agree with what you said on page 55.²

2d You state, that on entering the War, you determined to wage it with all possible forbearance [in]³ respect to private property and the estate of the *Church*. Is *that* stated so precisely, as to exclude the conclusion that you had not *changed* your Views in regard to the Church?

3rd You refer to the Instructions you had given to Taylor & Scott to levy contributions & exact supplies of the Enemy—and you state it as if they had not carried out your Views. Do you not think you ought to refer to Scott's requisition of \$150,000 from the City—and to the idea that he might have made others, not reported to the Department—and also repeat, that more urgent instructions had gone out to enforce the system more rigidly.⁴ Indeed, all this may be stated—but having doubts from my rapid reading of the Message, I have put them down.

4th The most important part of the Message next to the vigorous Prosecution of the War, and indeed intimately connected with it, is the view to further conquest & *occupation* (especially) which you suggest, in case the obstinate Mexicans hold out. I am not sure, that this part is sufficiently guarded to exclude the conclusion, that we do not aim at the *whole* of Mexico, or even a much larger slice of it. To refer to it, generally, as putting a duress upon the enemy, and forcing them to make peace by additional conquests, but not with an eye to *permanent* occupation, is all right. But I do not desire, either to excite the jealousies of foreign nations, by the prospect of taking all of Mexico ourselves, when you expressly deny them a single inch, *or* to give a handle to the Clay Clique to clamor about the whole or nearly all.⁵ I beg your attention, therefore, specially to the words which you use—so as to exclude any conclusion of this sort.

But I have done. I am sure, you will excuse me for saying this much.

THOMAS RITCHIE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Date and probable place identified through content analysis and from Polk's diary. Polk's entry of December 3, 1847, reports that the president gave Ritchie and Hopkins L. Turney the part of his Third Annual Message to Congress about the Mexican War that evening. This partial draft has not been found.

2. Polk's message referred many times to a potential treaty with Mexico and twice used the word "ultimatum": first in reference to the U.S. stipulation in 1847 that Mexico cede California and New Mexico and accept Texas's Rio Grande boundary, and second in reference to Mexican stipulations that included a Nueces River boundary for Texas. Ritchie, however, likely refers to Polk's eschewing the "conquest" of all of Mexico, which appears on pages 55–56 of the manuscript message the president sent to the printer. D, copy, in Washington Curran Whitthorne's hand. DLC–JKP.

3. Word uncertain.

4. As Polk explained in his message, he had William L. Marcy instruct Zachary Taylor on September 22, 1846, and Winfield Scott on April 3, 1847, to take supplies from the Mexicans if they believed the practice useful. Neither general chose to do so, believing that the practice would anger the Mexicans and inadequately supply the U.S. troops. They continued, instead, to buy supplies from Mexicans. Polk went on to note that, on September 1 and October 6, 1847, owing to the capture of Mexico City in September, Marcy issued new instructions to Scott more firmly urging him to collect "contributions"; Marcy sent copies of these to Taylor. Ritchie's advice may have influenced the latter section. Polk's first draft (see letter and notes in Polk to James Buchanan, October 16, 1847) discussed all these instructions but did not note the late 1847 ones' firmness or their goal of making the generals take action they had previously declined to take. See extracts from all the instructions in Senate Executive Document No. 14, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 2–3, 5, 7–9. Ritchie's other reference is to a \$150,000 levy on Mexico City's government that Scott announced on September 17, 1847, in exchange for U.S. Army protection of the city's people and buildings, including church property. The first of several Mexican contributions ordered by Scott in late 1847, it was paid over several weeks, from a loan, and used in part for supplies for sick or injured U.S. soldiers. Polk did not mention it in his message.

5. Henry Clay, on November 13, 1847, delivered a speech calling for an end to the Mexican War at a mass Whig meeting in the Market House in Lexington, Ky. He attacked Polk for starting a war that he considered "unnecessary and of offensive aggression" (in contrast to the War of 1812, "a War of National defence," which Clay believed many Federalists had unadvisedly opposed) and stressed Congress's constitutional primacy in setting war policy. He rejected the acquisition of Mexican territory—except, "by fair purchase," San Francisco—and especially its acquisition "for the purpose of introducing slavery into it." Clay concluded by introducing eight resolutions, which his listeners adopted; the last called on Americans who wanted the war to end or "are desirous that its purposes and objects shall be defined and known . . . to assemble together in

their respective communities, and to express their views, feelings and opinions.” Published in many newspapers and as pamphlets, the speech became a topic of conversation around the country.

FROM DANIEL T. JENKS

My Dear Sir

Philadelphia December 7th 1847

A War meeting is to be held here, early next week. A preparatory meeting will be held on Thursday night.¹ It will be one of the largest ever held here; Judge Sutherland² says, that the Citizens must march from their respective wards to the Chinese Museum, *where the Whigs held their meeting last night*³; this arrangement he says will bring out the people in the greatness of their strength. He is going in for it with all his might and you may rely upon its being done up in first rate style. He made an address, at the meeting held a week ago in favour of granting assistance to the Widows, wives, and children, of the absent volunteers in Mexico, which is a subject of universal approbation.⁴ Indeed he stands unrivalled as a popular orator with the people. One of the leading office holders of the State House Row⁵ told me that his speech was one of the most eloquent that he ever listened to.

I hope to see your Excellency before long when I will say much that I need not write. I will then say much that I have to say in favour of Mr Whitacers⁶ appointment as one of the appraisers, of this Port.

D. T. JENKS

ALS. DNA–RG 56. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. In this letter and his letters of December 11 and 18, 1847, Jenks discusses two pro–Mexican War meetings of Democrats in Philadelphia. Although here he indicates that one originally was planned for earlier, both meetings were held on Saturday, December 18. Each, according to Jenks, was preceded by a “preparatory” or “*preliminary*” meeting on a prior date. Jenks attended the December 18 meeting in the Chinese Museum. It passed forty-five resolutions, blaming Mexico for the war, calling for the acquisition of territory including California and New Mexico, rejecting the Wilmot Proviso, criticizing Henry Clay, and celebrating Polk’s war policy. That meeting also endorsed James Buchanan to succeed Polk as president. The other meeting, held in Commissioners’ Hall (a city government building), endorsed George M. Dallas for the presidency. It resolved, however, to support whomever the Democratic National Convention nominated. Buchanan and Dallas were longtime leaders of rival factions of Pennsylvania’s Democratic party, sometimes referred to by historians as, respectively, the “Amalgamator” and “Family” parties.

2. Pennsylvania surgeon and educator Joel B. Sutherland (c. 1792–1861) left the medical profession after serving in the military during the War of 1812. He served in the state house, 1813–15, 1821–22, and 1824; in the state senate,

1825–27; as an associate judge of the Philadelphia court of common pleas, 1833–34; and as a Jacksonian in the U.S. House, 1827–37. He failed to win reelection as a Whig in 1836 and 1838. From 1842 to 1845, he served, after appointment by Pres. John Tyler, as naval officer at Philadelphia.

3. Philadelphia County Whigs, in response to the last resolution passed by Lexington, Ky., Whigs after Henry Clay's November 13, 1847, speech, held a meeting in the Chinese Museum on December 6. So many attended that hundreds had to stand outside. Attendees passed eleven resolutions, praising Clay, Winfield Scott, and Zachary Taylor; affirming Congress's primacy in war policy; endorsing the purchase of part or all of California but not the rest of Mexico; calling for an end to the war; and opposing the spread of slavery into any acquired territory.

4. A meeting was held on November 22 in the Philadelphia County Court House to raise money for the families of volunteers fighting in Mexico.

5. State House Row consisted of two Philadelphia row houses built in 1812. Attached to Independence Hall, Pennsylvania's former state capitol, they housed offices for the city, county, and federal governments. They were torn down in the 1890s.

6. William B. Whitecar.

FROM ABRAHAM LINCOLN¹

Dear Sir:

House of Representatives, Decr. 8. 1847

Mr. Franklin L Rhoads,² of Pekin, Illinois, desires the appointment to a Lieutenancy in the U.S. Army, as you perceive by the Petition, accompanying this.³ Mr. Rhoads is a Whig; but of the fifteen persons who sign his Petition, I personally know five to be influential Democrats, five whigs, and the remaining five to be respectable men, though their politics are unknown to me. The Mr. Jones, who writes the accompanying letter, addressed to me,⁴ has received a Military education, and was Mr. Rhoads' captain in the battle of Cerro Gordo. If the appointment could be conferred on Mr. Rhoads, I should be personally grateful for it.

A. LINCOLN

ALS. IHi. Addressed locally. Published in *NLPL*, p. 38; *AL*, p. 554; and *CWAL*, p. 418.

1. Lincoln (1809–65), born in Kentucky and raised in Indiana, spent most of his adult life in Illinois. He was briefly a militia captain in the Black Hawk War in 1832; became deputy surveyor for Sangamon County in 1833; and began the practice of law in 1837. He served as postmaster at New Salem, 1833–36; in the state house, 1835–43; and in the U.S. House, 1847–49. A Whig, he strongly opposed the Mexican War. In 1858, by then a Republican, Lincoln unsuccessfully sought a U.S. Senate seat; two years later he successfully ran for president. After leading the Union through the Civil War and winning congressional pas-

sage of the thirteenth amendment to the Constitution, ending slavery, he was shot by John Wilkes Booth on April 14, 1865, and died the next morning.

2. Rhoads (1824–79), a Pennsylvania native, belonged to Company G of the Fourth Illinois Infantry Regiment, a Tazewell County company, which served July 1846–May 1847. Polk did not appoint him a lieutenant. After the war he became a river steamboat captain. During the Civil War, he served the Union as a colonel of volunteers.

3. Enclosure not found.

4. Letter not found. Edward Jones (1811–57), born in Georgetown, D.C., practiced law in Springfield and, from 1834, Pekin, Ill. He was Tazewell County circuit court clerk, 1834–37. Educated at a military academy, he served in the Black Hawk War. He commanded Company G of the Fourth Illinois Infantry Regiment.

FROM WILLIAM A. RICHARDSON
AND ABRAHAM LINCOLN¹

Dear Sir: House of Representatives. Decr. 8. 1847

We, the undersigned, members of the H.R. and being one Democrat and one Whig, respectfully solicit the appointment of Thomas Graham Jr.² of Beardstown, Illinois, to a first Lieutenancy in the U.S. Infantry. Mr. Graham is a Democrat, but is recommended, as we personally know, by most respectable men of both parties. Under these circumstances, we are sincerely desirous that he should receive the appointment. Accompanying this, are the letters which have been forwarded to us on the subject.³

W A RICHARDSON
A. LINCOLN

ALS. MBU–ECS. Addressed locally. Published in *CWAL*, pp. 417–18.

1. Letter written by Lincoln and signed by both. Richardson (1811–75), like Lincoln, was born in Kentucky and became an Illinois lawyer in the 1830s. A Democrat, he served as state attorney, 1835–37; in the state house, 1837–39 and 1845–47; and as a presidential elector for Polk, 1844. A captain and then major in the Mexican War, 1846–47, he served in the U.S. House, 1847–56 and 1861–63, and Senate, 1863–65. He was governor of Nebraska Territory, 1858.

2. Graham was an unsuccessful candidate for Cass County, Ill., surveyor in 1837 and served as an election clerk at Beardstown, in that county, in 1838. In 1839, then living in Morgan County, he bought forty acres of federal land in Cass County. Polk did not appoint him an officer. He may have been the Thomas Graham who served as a private in the Sac and Fox War in 1831 and, in the Illinois militia—like Lincoln—in the Black Hawk War in 1832.

3. Letters not found.

TO GEORGE BANCROFT

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Decr. 10th 1847

*Thomas E. Robins Esqr.*¹ the gentleman who will hand you this letter, has been introduced to me by *Col. Davis* and *Genl. Foote*² members of the Senate of the United States from the State of Mississippi, and I take pleasure in commanding him to your kind attentions. *Mr Robins* visit Great Brittain, with a view if possible, to arrange the public debt of that State, with the Foreign creditors.³ I am not informed of the extent of his powers, but these, as well as the object, he desires to accomplish, he will explain to you.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. Current location of sold letter unknown. Addressed to London and delivered by Thomas E. Robins. See also ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP.

1. Born in either New York or England, Robins (c. 1808–1850) became a prominent property owner and Democrat in Vicksburg, Miss. He was cashier of the Commercial and Railroad Bank of Vicksburg in 1836 and became an assignee of that bank after its failure in 1839. Accusations of fraud against Robins contributed to a series of duels in 1842–44. In 1842, meanwhile, he married Caroline Davis, Jefferson Davis's niece. He ran unsuccessfully in 1845 for the state senate.

2. Jefferson Davis and Henry S. Foote. Foote (1800 or 1804–1880), a Virginia-born lawyer, edited a Tuscaloosa, Ala., newspaper, 1824–26, then moved to Mississippi. A Democrat, he served as a presidential elector, 1844; in the U.S. Senate, 1847–52; and as Mississippi governor, 1852–54. He represented a Tennessee district in the Confederate Congress, 1862–65.

3. See letter and notes in Collin S. Tarpley to Polk, November 8, 1847, on the state bonds issued to support the Planters' Bank and the Mississippi Union Bank. In January 1848, with Davis's and James Buchanan's support, Robins went to England to try to convince bondholders to absolve the state of responsibility for the bonds in exchange for payments raised from private contributions. Because Robins could not guarantee those payments, the bondholders declined.

FROM CORNELIUS W. LAWRENCE

My Dear Sir

New York 10th Decr. 1847

I think in your Message you have placed our Country in an impregnable position & if Congress will pass Resolutions approving & sustaining you, a peace must follow without delay.

Were we a United people the Mexicans could have no hope to do better than you propose.¹ If therefore the War is extended it will be the consequence of the hopes the enemy may have that the opponents of your administration may gain the ascendancy.

You have not time to read long letters.

Please give my best respects to Mrs. Polk & believe me

C W LAWRENCE

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Polk, in his Third Annual Message to Congress, addressed many issues relating to the Mexican War, including the treaty terms proposed through Nicholas P. Trist earlier in 1847 and “the levy of forced contributions” from the Mexicans (see letter and notes in Thomas Ritchie to Polk, December 4, 1847). Lawrence probably refers to Polk’s insistence that, at the conclusion of the war, the United States retain California (including Baja California) and New Mexico plus, possibly, other parts of Mexico already occupied by U.S. forces.

FROM DANIEL T. JENKS

My Dear Sir

Philadelphia December 11th 1847

I confess I dont like the *call* of certain Custom House officers. Which is “to express their sentiments in relation to the Mexican War.” The other call is of the Democratic citizens favourable to the policy of the Administration in regard to the War of Mexico.¹

And what makes the first call objectionable, is that they propose to hold a *Town meeting* in the county court House, a place that can be crowded with 4 or 5 hundred men. The *preliminary* meeting of the other Democratic citizens is to be held in the court room.

But the grand mass Meeting for the War is to be held at the Chinese Museum which I promise will be full to overflowing. Holding a Town meeting in favour of the War, in a court House, is not the thing; It is only suitable for a preliminary meeting. The Democrats who are to meet in the chinese Museum, offered to compromise by dividing the officers but they would not so agree to it, tonight they hold their Town meeting for the war in the court House.² I told some of them that it was all rong that they were a injuring your Administration by this course; It is just as I predicted to you, it would result in makeing a division in the Democratic party; When the same men held a meeting in favour of the Vice President for the Presidency in 48.³

In my opinion their ought to be a stop put to this thing at once; I regret to inform you of this division, when all ought to be united in supporting your Administration in relation to the War with Mexico. I send you this that you may know what is going on, I thought it best to keep you well advised. In hast

DANIEL T JENKS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked “Private.”

1. Jenks refers to the calls for war meetings to be held by Philadelphia-area Democrats supporting presidential hopefuls George M. Dallas and James Buchanan, respectively, on December 18; see letter and notes in Jenks to Polk, December 7, 1847.

2. Jenks apparently refers here to the Dallas supporters' "preliminary meeting," mentioned in the previous paragraph.

3. On the pro-Dallas meeting of December 1, see letter and notes in Jenks to Polk, December 3, 1847.

FROM ABRAHAM LINCOLN

Washington, Decr. 11. 1847

Some days since I transmitted to you the application of Mr. Rhoads of Pekin Illinois, for a Lieutenancy.¹ Since then I have received the enclosed letter of Hon. E. D. Baker, in his behalf,² which I now take the liberty of submitting to you.

A. LINCOLN

ALS. IHi. Probably addressed locally. Published in *NLPL*, p. 39; *AL*, p. 555 (recipient therein misidentified as Franklin Pierce); and *CWAL*, p. 419.

1. Petition regarding Franklin L. Rhoads, not found, enclosed in Lincoln to Polk, December 8, 1847.

2. Letter not found. Edward D. Baker (1811–61), born in London, moved with his family to Philadelphia in 1815 and to Illinois in 1825. He became a Springfield, Ill., lawyer and Whig, serving in the state house, 1837–41; the state senate, 1841–45; and the U.S. House, 1845–47 and 1849–51. He was colonel of the Fourth Illinois Infantry Regiment, July 1846–May 1847, and commanded James Shields's brigade after the latter's injury at Cerro Gordo. Baker represented Oregon in the U.S. Senate as a Republican, 1860–61.

FROM JOSEPH H. TALBOT¹

Dear Sir

Memphis. Decr. 11th 47

I have just learned the death of Capt. J W. Perkins² of 14th Inf. USA. at Mexico. I addressed you a pressing letter in behalf of Capt. P. when he was appointed,³ and did hope he would live to fulfil the high expectation I had formed of his military capacity, but disease, has destroyed all our hopes. I am requested by my friend John R McClanahan⁴ of Jackson to suggest to you his appointment to fill the vacancy, created by the death of Capt. P. I have known Mr. McClanahan from a his boy hood; he is now about 23 years age, of vigorous constitution, ardent temperament and bold manly independence. He served with great credit as a private in the 2 Ten regiment, and participated in the battle of Cerro Gordo. He has always been your warm and devoted friend, and I have

no doubt will do honor to the army. The war party is evidently gaining adherents throughout the whole country, and the late demonstration of Mr. Clay at Lexington,⁵ though designed to check the war spirit, will have a contrary effect. All the old Federalists adhering to Mr. Clay, will place the oponents of the Mexican war in a time with the oponenets of the war of 1812, and will become as odious. This Mr. Clay was fearful of, and one grant⁶ object of this speech, was to encourage them; hence his lame attempt to make the war of 1812 a definsive and the present an offinsive war, when history and notorious facts, reverse them.⁷ It does seem, that *Fate is against this man*: for although, his eye has been upon the Presidency for 30 years, and has never been withdrawn for a moment, and let his prospects for a time, be ever so flattering, he will either say or do something, that will convince the patriotic portion of the country that he is unworthy of that exalted station. He is always ready to throw himself into the arms of every faction, and my fear has been, that the Whigs would see this, and lay him on the shelf forever, but it seems he is still their ruling star, Amen! It is evident that while the Whigs have made free use in the late elections of Genl. Taylor name, that in superceding him with Mr. Clay, an attempt will be made to hitch him on to play second fiddle for the Vice Presidency, and in this they may succede, as from the day of the battle of Palo Alto⁸ the whigs have used, the most insidious means to estrange him from the administration, with the succss of which, his own Glory was identified. He has never returned home and will be in all plied,⁹ and a few months will develop every thing. I have unconsciously been drawn into a political speculation. Excuse me, while I subscribe myself

JOS. H TALBOT

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received January 2, 1848; "Private."

1. Talbot (c. 1800s–c. 1854) was a West Tennessee lawyer and, on occasion, railroad commissioner, newspaper owner, and bank director. He served as Tennessee Supreme Court clerk in the middle and late 1830s; U.S. attorney for the state's western district, 1838; state attorney general for the district that included Madison County, 1841–46; and clerk and master of the chancery court at Memphis, 1846–47. According to the Goodspeed Publishing Company's *History of Tennessee* (1887), he was removed from the last post in March because he "was deprived of his reason."

2. A Nashville lawyer, Joseph W. Perkins (?–1847) served as an alderman of that city in 1839. Appointed a captain on February 23, 1847, he joined the Fourteenth Infantry Regiment on April 9 and died in Mexico City on October 22.

3. Letter not found.

4. John R. McClanahan (1818 or 1819–1865) studied at Jackson's West Tennessee College and owned and edited the Jackson *Republican* before

becoming a first sergeant in the Second Tennessee Infantry Regiment, June 1846–May 1847. Polk did not give him the captaincy for which Talbot here recommends him. After running unsuccessfully as a Democrat for the state house in 1848, he became co-owner and coeditor of the *Memphis Daily Appeal* in December 1848. That newspaper, under his sole ownership and editorship, became known as the “Moving Appeal” during the Civil War because, fleeing from Union incursions, it operated in numerous Confederate locations between 1862 and 1865.

5. Reference is to Henry Clay’s speech in Lexington, Ky., on November 13, 1847.

6. Talbot probably meant to write “grand.”

7. The War of 1812, fought between the United States and the United Kingdom, 1812–15, stemmed from a variety of perceived offenses by the British, including the impressment of U.S. sailors into the British navy during the Napoleonic Wars. Among its outcomes was Andrew Jackson’s rise to national prominence after he led Americans to victory at the Battle of New Orleans on January 8, 1815, fifteen days after the signing of the Treaty of Ghent, which ended the war.

8. American forces under Zachary Taylor defeated Mexicans at Palo Alto on May 8, 1846.

9. Besides its modern meanings of “urge” and “seek influence over,” the verb “ply” formerly meant “change the mind of,” though that use was rare after the seventeenth century.

FROM GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir,

City of Mexico Decr 12th 1847

When I wrote you last,¹ Genl. Scott had not furnished me with a copy of his charges against me. I have since received them. They are one *tissue* of slanderous and scandalous falsehoods, which he knows he can’t prove, unless he proves *lies*.²

Majr. Burns³ has come out & acknowledged the authorship of the “Leonidas” letter, and acquits me of all knowledge of, & participation in the transaction.

The paper referred to as having been furnished to Freamer,⁴ was, as I am prepaered to prove, furnished him at his *own instance* & upon his application, & was the substance of my original skeleton report, & is in all assential parts, strictly true as I can shew by proof.

Several (indeed all the specifications except the first charge) of the specifications, *import no offence*, but they abound with scandalous epithets, shewing great bitterness and malignity of heart in Scott. You will perceive that he has not made a single specification or charge against me, based upon the cause of my arrest, but that he has gone out of doors & hunted up *private talks* & bases his charges upon them.

Nothing could better shew his malignant purpose than do these malicious & frivolous charges, in which he has wholly shifted his grounds of assault upon me, from my letter to the Secretary of War, and *assumed* the subject of his most infamous order No. 349,⁵ in which order, he assumed as true, the *slandorous comments* of the daily Picayune,⁶ and based *official action* upon them, and tried by it to degrade and disgrace myself & Worth,⁷ while our only offence consisted in having indiscreet friends, whose partiality betrayed them into the folly of giving us more credit, than it was *pleasant* to the General-in-chief, any of his *juniors* in rank should have. If under such feelings of jealousy on his part, the interests of the service are to be compromised, and his two highest officers in rank, are to be thus degraded & *disgraced*, it is surely time for us to know it, & if not, then I hope you will at once take such steps as will vindicate our rights, & the honour of the army & the interests of the service.

This letter will reach you too late, to enable you to base any action upon it, but I desire to give you some information, for your private satisfaction, of the true character of these charges. You will be able to judge from my official reports, and from Scott's & from his *private notes* to me, (copies of which I sent you)⁸ whether I did *my duty*, and whether I deserve such treatment as I have received at his hands. You will see too from the charges, the effort he is now making to strip me of any reputation I may have earned in this service. His motives are too shallow and his real feeling too evident to escape your observation, or that of any one else who *knows the facts*.

My opposition to the terms of the armistice⁹ was not, as you are fully aware, *voluntary*. You imposed upon me *the duty* (to your own honour & that of the country) of exercising my judgement in this very matter, so far as I might be called upon to act by Mr Trist & Genl Scott.¹⁰ Beleving that they were compromising the honour of your administration & the interests & honour of the army and the country, I was *obliged* by my obligations of duty, both to you and the country, *to say so*. If on this, I was right, surely I should receive the approval and protection of the Govt. My opposition was not *factious*. It was decided & open, but *not violent* & should not have offensive.

I expressed my decided opposition to it, and talked personally to Genl. Pierce,¹¹ gave him my views fully & freely before he took his seat as a commissioner and he promised me, he never would agree to any armistice until or unless Chapultepec¹² was surrendered as a guarantee of the good faith of the [enemy].¹³ Genl. Quitman¹⁴ says he promised him the same thing but deceived him. I addressed Genl. Scott, a note upon the same subject by *Genl Pierce*.

Though I have confided so much in Pierce and went so far in my report as to compliment him when not even *in the field*, still I am satisfied he left here *sore* on this armistice question, and cool toward myself, though professing the warmest attachment for me.

You will not, hence, fail to see that it was my judgement & my fidelity to your honour & that of the country and not any imprudence of my own, which has thus involved me in this bitter *warfare*.

I trust I may be placed *right* before the army and the nation about those *Howitzers*. In reference to that subject, Scott's tools have already started the report that I attempted to appropriate these guns to *my own use*, so that you see I will soon be branded with an attempt to *embezzle the public* property, if that record does not receive your attention & action. As all the *facts* of the case are embodied in the record, and *clearly acquit me*, of any, the slightest participation in the transaction, It seems to me, under these circumstances, that it would be *competant* for the Govt. by order, to declare me *utterly blameless* in the premises, &C. I do not see the necessity of referring the case back when the proof upon which its judgement must be based, is before you. This is however, a matter for your own consideration. I only ask for such action as will bring the proof before the country and clear me of *unjust censure*. This becomes *now* the more necessary, since the Tools of Scott, have started the report (which has come back to me from Vera Cruz) that I had attempted to appropriate these Guns to my own use.

Mr. Trist is still here. We had understood from the Union, & other sources, that he was recalled,¹⁵ but his still remaining here, now for nearly one month, & after he had an opportunity of going home, leaves the impression with the mexican population that the annunciation of his recall *was false*, that the Govt. at home was intreiguing, & sought by this *sort of stroke* of policy, to beget an anxiety for peace.

He seems to me that he is thus doing the Govt. its *motives & object*, manifest *injustice*, & is defeating the whole *object* of his *recall*. He is said to be still in correspondence with the Functionaries of the mexican Govt. I have never, in the whole course of my life, been so much deceived in any man. The confidence you expressed in him, & your opinion of his talents, judgement & prudence and fidelity to your Administration, induced me, as to him, to lay aside my usual caution and circumspection, and to exert myself to bring about a reconciliation between himself & Scott. I took him into my quarters and to my own table at Puebla, & subsisted him at my own expense, And to this day have never had an unkind word with him, yet he has *betrayed* all the *conversations* I ever had with him—conversations of the *strictest personal* character & *confidential nature*, & has in some of them wholly mis-represented the

very conversations themselves. I am now *perfectly* satisfied that he was at the bottom of the *intreigue* which caused Scott to fall out with me. He is a *traitor to friendship* at Heart, and will, if he have *opportunity & motive*, betray you or your honour. My only surprize is, that he has your confidence in such degree.

I know I am not mistaken when I tell you that with the exception of Scott's tools & his seychophants & dependents, the sympathies of the army are very strongly on my side.

He restricts me to the limits of the city, which leaves me but little opportunity of taking any healthful exercise, which I much need from my long confinement by my wound, which has greatly impaired my health. I am still lame, & expect I shall most probably always remain so.

You will see from what has already occurred, & from the violence and injustice of Scott's course towards myself, that it will be impossible for me to remain in the service, if Scott remains here in command of the army. If he remains, I shall desire to retire the moment I am relieved from the embarrassments which now surround me. At this determination you cannot be surprized. I do not desire to quit now, as I think I could be useful to the country & to *our own* proper interests by remaining, but I cannot & will not remain in a position, so *utterly intollerable*.

Your Brother William¹⁶ has been a good deal unwell, but is now improving, & is upon duty. He is *steady* and *devoted* to business. That he will distinguish himself if have any opportunity I have no doubt. I will be *his friend* in *all things*, and he has thrown himself upon me with the *fullest confidence*.

Col. Smyth will communicate to you many things of interest.¹⁷ He was here long enough to get pretty well into the hang of things. I think you may rely upon the correctness of his information, & in the justness of his conclusions.

I have sent by Col. Smyth, a beautiful & accurate painting, representing the storming of Chapultepec by my Division, which if the *President & his Lady* approve, I desire to be deposited for the present in the White House.¹⁸ I thought it would be an object of interest to the visitors at Washington this winter. It is an admirable representation—taken upon the spot. I sent it to the care of Col. J. K. Walker.¹⁹

I hope soon to know what action you take in reference to my arrest & C.

From the recent indications of public sentiments at home, I think it manifest the Whig party are dropping Genl. Taylor, & will fall back upon Mr Clay.²⁰

I know your position upon the subject, and your wishes but there are connected with it, considerations paramount to *all others* which in

my judgement make it your duty to your country, to *forego* your own wishes, and submit this matter to your Friends. Thus far, I regard your administration as the most *eventful*, the most *important* & the most *brilliant*, by far, as any since the Foundation of our Govt. You leave more indelibly, the stamp & impress of your genius & ado, and of the glorious success of our arms, under your orders, than any other, and the events of your administration will exercise a more controlling influence upon the destiny of the Republic for hundreds of years to come, than that of any American statesman.

You have but one thing remaining to be done and that is to *close this war* as it has begun. If this is not done, you are to your own lasting & enduring fame to yield your private feelings & predilections to retire, to the wishes of your friends, & the interests of your country.

In other words, you must, (if in doing so, you hazard nothing) suffer your friends again to place you in the Presidency. You are identified with the war in its inception, (which was some what unpopular) and in its successful prosecution and glorious results thus far. It is an honour that *no one* should *share* with you. The Responsibility of it having been, *all upon* you, you should not divide its honours, honours so resplendant as to dazzle and almost bewilder the nation, by allowing any other President to bring it to a close. You must know that I would be the last man in the world to advise you to pursue a course at all inconsistent with your own lasting fame. Nothing could convince me to violate my own convictions of duty upon that subject. My full, clear & undoubted convictions are, that you owe it to *your-self*, to your country to yield your wishes to duty, and if the war is not closed, to leave the nation to the exercise of its own wishes upon this subject. A few months will enable you to judge of the prospects of peace, and to make up your own mind upon the subject. All the indications we have of the purposes of Govt. in the prosecution of the war, look to the occupation of the country, with heavy contributions upon it, as the future policy. This policy with a *sufficient* force will, in all human probability, end the war in less than 12 months. If it does not, it must result in the total subjugation of this country and its incorporation into the American Union.

This last event, is just half a century in advance of the *greatness* of the *age*, and of the *natural developments* of the elements of our Govt. It will be seizing upon and appropriating to the present generation the glory and honour that rightfully belongs to the 2nd generation after that now in existence. The greatness of this achievement, the grandure of the incomprehensible result, & its affect upon the destiny of our own country, almost bewilder my mind, & make me tremble for the result.

I regard this policy, of occupation, as almost necessarily leading to incorporation. After adopting it you must close the work. You must either make peace, or settle the question of incorporation.

If you make a treaty, I beg you to look once more to the position of the Panuca River,²¹ to its intersection of the main chain of the “*Siera Madre*,” with this mountain to the southern boundary of *Chihuahua* & thence with this and the north boundary of Senora to the Gulph of California.

The finest natural boundary in the world, in itself a National bulward,²² requiring but few defences, and embracing all that immensely fertile country west of the Gulph.

If you should alternately have to take a boundary this is the boundary to *take*. I refer you to a letter of mine written from Tampico in Decr last upon this subject²³ for fuller information of the country.

Genl. Pierce has gone home intending to resign. He is right for doing so with his views & feelings & *reasons*.

I have thought that Genl. Shields²⁴ would like to have the place & I know of no man whom I would prefer to have it to Shields if he wants it. Since Shields left here, I have heard that he gave utterance to unkind feeling towards me at Vera Cruz, but I can scarcely credit. If he is friendly to me (for I would not want him in Division if he were not) I would be gratified that you would appoint him.

If he should not want it, then I know of no man I would be better pleased with than Genl. Cushing.²⁵ These suggestions are thrown out without any wish of interfering with that appointment, & without the knowledge of either of those Gentlemen. They are both Gallant officers, entitled to the fullest confidence. Shields rank & services if he wants it make his claims paramount, & my preference would be for Shields over all others if his feelings are right towards me, as he has given me every reason to believe they are throughout our long acquaintance.

Remember me to Mrs Polk & accept assurances of my Friendship.

GID. J. PILLOW

PS. Capt Ohara, of the Q.M. Department and Capt Pope of the Rifles,²⁶ have forwarded an application for a transfer, viz. Ohara to the line, & Pope to the Q.M. Depatment. Pope had, previously forwarded his resignation in consequence of some difficulty with his commanding officer. I hope you will direct the transfer as it will accommodate both officers & will affect no other persons interests. They are both your warm friends & mine. I addressed you an application some time since in favour of *Ohara*.²⁷ This transfer will meet his wishes and it will releive Pope from the necessity of quitting *the service*. He is a brave & Gallant officer. The transfer will render it unnecessary to receive Pope’s resignation. The application goes to the Adj. Genl.²⁸ by the mail which carries this. G.J.P.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*Private & Confidential*.”

1. Pillow to Polk, November 23 and 27, 1847.

2. Winfield Scott filed two charges against Pillow, the second divided into eight specifications. The charges asserted that Pillow had written or solicited the Leonidas letter (“the first charge,” mentioned by Pillow in this letter); had lied in official reports, conversation with other officers, and his November 15 letter to William L. Marcy so as to improve his own and reduce Scott’s reputation; and had pressured James L. Freaner of the New Orleans *Delta* and John H. Peoples of the *Daily American Star* to do his bidding. See letter and notes in Pillow to Polk, November 23 and 27, 1848. For the charges, see Senate Executive Document No. 65, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 317–28.

3. Archibald W. Burns.

4. James L. Freaner (?–1852), born in Maryland, worked at the Tallahassee *Floridian* in 1844, then moved to New Orleans. He enlisted in the army at the beginning of the Mexican War, becoming a sergeant, and served as a war correspondent for the New Orleans *Delta*, eventually using the pseudonym “Mustang.” He also carried documents between Mexico and Washington City, among them Winfield Scott’s November 1847 dispatches and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. A friend of Nicholas P. Trist, he successfully urged that diplomat to remain in Mexico after being recalled by Polk. After the war Freaner reported on the gold rush for the New Orleans *Picayune*.

5. Pillow to William L. Marcy, November 15, 1847, and General Orders, No. 349. See letter and notes in Pillow to Polk, November 23 and 27, 1847.

6. Established in 1837, the New Orleans *Daily Picayune* (and its weekly counterpart) played a key role in reporting on the Mexican War. Coeditor George W. Kendall organized a network of correspondents throughout the war-front and a network of couriers and steamboats to speed their stories to New Orleans. Those stories often arrived in the United States before official government dispatches and regularly were quoted by other newspapers around the country. By “*slandorous comments*,” Pillow may mean the likely sarcastic passages added to the Leonidas letter in its September 16 publication in the *Daily Picayune*.

7. William J. Worth.

8. Pillow refers to Winfield Scott, but the four letters were written to Pillow by Henry L. Scott, on November 6, 15, 22, and 23, 1847. Pillow had enclosed them, along with other documents, in Pillow to Polk, November 23 and 27, 1847.

9. Charge 2, specification 6, asserted that Pillow had claimed falsely in his November 15 letter to Marcy that he had opposed firmly the Armistice of Tacubaya. According to the specification, he actually had supported it on August 22 but expressed reservations the next day.

10. Pillow probably refers to Polk’s requests that he advise Nicholas P. Trist on his peace efforts. Polk to Pillow, April 14, 1847; Polk to Pillow, May 18, 1847; Polk to Pillow, May 25, 1847 (addressed to New Orleans).

11. Franklin Pierce.

12. U.S. forces under Winfield Scott captured Chapultepec Castle, located immediately west of Mexico City and housing a military academy, by defeating Mexican defensive forces under Gen. Nicolás Bravo Rueda on September 13,

1847. Grapeshot during the battle broke Pillow's left ankle. The Americans then proceeded to take the Mexican capital.

13. Word uncertain.

14. John A. Quitman.

15. James Buchanan recalled Trist in his dispatch no. 5, dated October 5, 1847. He cited Polk's concern that Trist's staying would suggest the United States' openness to more generous peace terms than the president would accept. *WJB*-7, pp. 425-27. The *Washington Daily Union* confirmed the recall, reported earlier by other newspapers, on October 19.

16. William H. Polk.

17. William M. Smyth (?-1850), in August 1847, was appointed a bearer of dispatches to Winfield Scott. A South Carolina-born Democrat, he edited newspapers including the Grand Gulf (Miss.) *Advertiser*, 1834-39; the Jackson (Miss.) *Southern Reformer*, 1843-46; and the New Orleans *Daily Atlas*, 1847. He was Grand Gulf postmaster in the 1830s and became clerk of the Mississippi House in 1842. Although he headed north from New Orleans on January 11, 1848, and reached Baltimore on January 27, he still had not seen Polk when he wrote to the president on March 23.

18. Pillow probably refers to a painting completed in Mexico City around December 3 by a Mr. Walker and scheduled to be sent north on a train on December 5 or 6. Most likely painted by James Walker, an American artist then living in Mexico City, that painting formed the basis of an 1848 chromolithograph, *The Storming of Chapultepec Sept. 13th 1847*, by Nathaniel Currier. The painting's current whereabouts are unknown, but a painting of a battle, probably Chapultepec, suffered damage to its frame during transport from the Executive Mansion to Polk's Nashville home in January 1849. (The painting referenced by Pillow is not to be confused with James Walker's later painting, *The Battle of Chapultepec*, produced for the U.S. Capitol in 1857-62, and the artist is not to be confused with Polk's brother-in-law James Walker or Capt. James H. Walker.)

19. Joseph Knox Walker.

20. Henry Clay.

21. Pillow refers to the Pánuco River.

22. Pillow probably meant to write "bulwark."

23. Letter not found. The Mexican port of Tampico was seized by the U.S. Navy in November 1846 and occupied by U.S. forces for the war's duration.

24. James Shields.

25. Caleb Cushing (1800-1879) was a native of Massachusetts and, like George Bancroft, a Harvard University graduate of 1817. He served as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1835-43; as minister to China, 1843-45; and as U.S. attorney general under Pres. Franklin Pierce, 1853-57. A militia colonel, he organized a Massachusetts regiment to serve in Mexico. Polk appointed him a brigadier general in April 1847; he served until July 1848.

26. Polk did not grant transfers for Theodore O'Hara and Henry C. Pope. Kentuckian O'Hara (1820-67) taught Greek and practiced law before editing newspapers including the Frankfort *Democratic Rally*, which he and

Pope founded in 1844. A clerk in the Second Auditor's Office of the Treasury Department, 1845–46, and a captain and assistant quartermaster of volunteers, 1846–48, he was brevetted major for his service at Contreras and Churubusco in August 1847. He won fame as a poet, especially for "The Bivouac of the Dead" (1847), a memorial to men who died in the war. Pope (1808–49), a Louisville, Ky., lawyer, edited the *Louisville Advertiser* in 1843 before founding the *Democratic Rally* with O'Hara. A clerk in the Second Auditor's Office, 1845–46, he became captain of Company D of the U.S. Mounted Rifle Regiment in May 1846. He left the army in December 1847, soon after being disciplined for drinking, though he afterward claimed to have signed the resignation while insane and tried, unsuccessfully, to cancel it. Maj. William W. Loring (1818–86), a North Carolina-born Floridian, commanded his regiment from February 1847.

27. Letter not found.

28. Roger Jones.

FROM SAMUEL H. LAUGHLIN¹

Dear Sir, Land Office, Washington City, Dec. 15, 1847

I learn from letters from East Tennessee, that the whigs, especially those of Knox and Knoxville feel greatly outraged at Mr. Bell's² election to the Senate, and that a series of *indignation meetings*, beginning at Knoxville, are to be held in consequence of it. W. B. A. Ramsay's³ election as Secretary of state has failed to quiet the displeasure of his whig brethren at Mr. Bells election.

Dr. Lyon,⁴ a whig, appointed a surgeon, or Asst. Surgeon, under Dr. Porshall⁵ of Athens, it is understood has or will decline in favor of a Dr. Gaines⁶ of Sullivan, who is also stated on the best authority to be a rabid, discontented whig. Dr. Carden's friends, as well as himself would have been happy if he could have received either of these appointments. I find that he is so anxious for service, that he will serve in any capacity to which you might be pleased to appoint him.

The accompanying recommendation, I beg leave respectfully to submit in his behalf, at the request of a number of his friends.⁷ Any of the places mentioned or referred to in the recommendation, I am fully persuaded would be well bestowed.

Hoping my recommendation may not be deemed obtrusive, I have stated in it what I sincerely believe.

As I endeavor as much as possible to avoid all interference in regard to appointments—knowing how little weight my recommendations ought to have, being only those of an isolated individual—I hope I will have your indulgence for what I am going to say in regard to an office in the Land Department. In regard to it, I have no personal wish or feeling to gratify, or which can be disappointed; and there has been no moment

of time since I have been in office myself, in which I would not have cheerfully placed my own office promptly at your disposal, rather than embarrass you in any wish or purpose you might have in view to promote the public service. I know how multiplied and vexatious, and how continually recurring your troubles and cares are in regard to appointments. Rather than add my mite to these cares, by applying to you, and applying to see you for others as I have been greatly importuned to do on almost innumerable occasions—and knowing that it could and ought to have no effect but to increase your troubles in listening and talking—I have abstained to my own continual personal regret from annoying you with calls and visits in person. To peremptorily refuse to obtrude on your privacy, and on your business hours, has excused me to many, very many, who have requested me to bear messages and papers. But had I not known, that you knew me too well and too long, not to know that my motives in not oftener paying my personal respects were proper, I would have heretofore been much oftener an intruder on your time and attention. If I need apology, the foregoing contains it in truth.

The office I would speak of with the sincerest respect, is the chief clerkship of the Land Office. He is an officer who must daily have more practical influence upon the operations of the Office, than the Commissioner⁸ himself. Of some sixty clerks, and their daily duties, he should be well informed. But what is of more importance, he should have an intimate knowledge of the whole Land system—and its various intricate branches. He should know the clerks, and heads of these branches, and they should know and confide in him—or the business must drag heavily and be retarded. Without a clerk, in whom his confidence is unlimited, the Commissioner must be constantly embarrassed. No *new man* to the office can possibly learn all the duties of a chief clerk, however capable a man he may be, in less than four or five months. In that time, many things would be sure to be delayed—and the Commissioners labors, already very onerous, would be greatly increased.

These are matters about which I can only converse here with Judge Young, but I daily feel and see in the office, that there is a great anxiety for the appointment of some one known in the office generally, and who will possess at once the confidence of the office. The temporary incumbent, Rev. J. Robb,⁹ a man of great worth, I feel sure, has almost the unanimous good wishes of the office. Out of the whole number of clerks, I have heard of but one since Col. Piper's¹⁰ withdrawal, who would oppose Mr. Robbs appointment.

To our old and ever circumspect friend the Postmaster General,¹¹ I have stated all my views, founded on experience in the affairs of the Land Office, in regard to this matter. A chief clerk, who should be

ignorant of the office—who might be proud, austere or retired under cover of his authority or unpopular for any cause, would be a continual drawback of a very heavy percentage of the amount of work done, in the whole office—even upon my Bureau, where the effects of such a clerk would be felt, as well as in the other end of the building.

A sincere wish to promote the service, which I hope my improvements in the increased work done in my office has demonstrated, is my only motive for thus writing. I wish you to know all the facts. Personal and political regards—or pride in the success of every thing done in your administration, may give a resemblance of meddling to these suggestions. Knowing my own motives however to be proper, I know I will not be misunderstood by you.

S. H. LAUGHLIN

P.S. Judge Young, though worthy of every confidence, has no knowledge of this note, nor has any one.¹²

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally; marked “(Private)” on the cover and at the top of the letter. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received December 22, 1847; “Private.”

1. A lawyer from McMinnville, Tenn., and founding editor of the *Nashville Union*, Laughlin (1796–1850) served as a Democrat in the Tennessee Senate, 1839–45. Appointed by Polk, he served as recorder in the General Land Office, 1845–49.

2. John Bell.

3. William B. A. Ramsey (1799–1874), a brother of James G. M. Ramsey, was named after another brother who had died shortly before the younger William’s baptism. He was clerk and master of the chancery court at Knoxville, 1832–48; a publisher and editor of the *Knoxville Register*, 1835–39; the city’s first elected mayor, 1838–39; and Tennessee secretary of state, 1847–55.

4. Washington H. Lyon.

5. John Parshall.

6. James S. Gaines.

7. Enclosure not found.

8. Democrat Richard M. Young (1798–1861) was commissioner of the General Land Office, 1847–49. Born in Kentucky, he had begun his legal and political careers after moving to Illinois in 1817, serving in the Illinois House, 1820–22; as a federal circuit court judge, 1825–37; in the U.S. Senate, 1837–43; and as an Illinois Supreme Court judge, 1843–47.

9. John Robb (c. 1790–1869), a clerk in the General Land Office since 1844 or 1845, took over as temporary principal clerk of public lands in fall 1847. Polk, as Laughlin here recommends, made the appointment permanent in January; Robb served until 1850. Born in Baltimore, he had been an officer in Andrew Jackson’s staff in the War of 1812; chief clerk of the War Department, 1831–33,

often acting as secretary of war; superintendent of the armory at Springfield, Mass., 1833–41; and a navy chaplain, 1844. A Methodist minister, he preached to congregations in Maryland and Washington City.

10. James H. Piper (1800–1854), a former president of Columbia College, Columbia, Tenn., and East Tennessee College (now the University of Tennessee), Knoxville, served in the Virginia Senate, 1840–46; as principal clerk of public lands, in the General Land Office, 1846–47; and as acting commissioner of that office for most of 1846 and January 1847.

11. Cave Johnson.

12. Laughlin wrote the end of his last paragraph and his signature in the right margin; he wrote his postscript in the left margin.

FROM DANIEL T. JENKS

My Dear Sir

Philadelphia December 18th 1847

The great War meeting held this evening in the Chinese Museum, went off in a most Splendid Style.¹ The place was crowded to overflowing. The speaking was excellent, and the resolutions first rate. When one of them was read that had your name in, it seemed to electrify the whole assembly, and they gave nine cheers for your Excellency. We are determined upon giving a full and vigorous support to your Administration; “The Polk War,”² has added a lustre to your name that will never be forgotten.

The *friends* of Mr Dallas held a meeting this evening in the Commissioners Hall. I think they might have chosen some other night, but as it was we did not *miss* them; The War meeting was one of the largest I ever saw assemble there, and every one seemed delighted with the *proceedings* I can assure you.

I told your Excellency we would have a large meeting³ and so we had. Judge Sutherland⁴ brought out all his old friends & they are numerous, who were associated with him during the Tyler⁵ administration. Mr. Whitacer⁶ also was very active in sustaining your War.

DANIEL T JENKS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. On the war meetings of James Buchanan’s and (as discussed in the next paragraph) George M. Dallas’s supporters in Philadelphia on December 18, see letter and notes in Jenks to Polk, December 7, 1847.

2. Newspapers occasionally had referred to the Mexican War as “the Polk war,” generally in a critical sense, since late 1846, and Pennsylvania Whig Andrew Stewart used the term on February 13, 1847, during debate in the U.S. House over the Three Million Dollar Bill.

3. Jenks to Polk, December 7, 1847; Jenks to Polk, December 11, 1847.

4. Joel B. Sutherland.
5. John Tyler.
6. William B. Whitecar.

FROM FRANCIS W. PICKENS¹

My dear Sir

Edgewood near Edgefield² 18. Decr. 1847

I dislike to trespass upon your time, which must now be entirely occupied, but as you have done me the kindness to send me your message, I cannot forbear expressing my admiration and unqualified approbation of the able & bold manner in which you have developed your views upon all the great questions of national interest. I have also read with great pleasure the very lucid report of Mr. Walker.³ No man can read these documents, without feeling that his country has a great destiny, and without exulting in her triumphant career. Those who think they can limit the full developement of our institutions, by restricting the acquisition of territory, or throwing restrictions over it, when acquired,⁴ vastly mistake the genius & spirit of our institutions. We are destined, under Providence, to develop the great progressive ideas of the age, and a faction or a strong man, may occasionally throw themselves across our path but they will be crushed and forgotten in our onward move.

The issues made by Mr. Clay in his speech & resolutions⁵ are against the whole feeling of the American heart, and if the Democratic party act with *any prudence*, our success is certain. Our policy ought to be to make our opponents responsible for the issues Clay has made, and turn the whole contest on those issues rather than raise too many of our own. And then let us *take true men & strong men*, who know no compromise with fractions, or fragments, or factions of the party, and move onward upon great principles, feeling for the country, the whole country, & *nothing but the country*. But I have said more already than would be justified by one in so humble a position as myself.

The last time I wrote you it was in favour of the promotion of young Pratt, of our Regt.,⁶ but he has since died.

I now take the liberty of enclosing two letters to you, from many others on the same points, which I hope you will merely refer to the proper department for proper consideration.⁷ I cannot expect you hardly to read them, but would be glad if they could receive from you the proper *direction* merely. Lieut. P. Noble,⁸ the writer of one, is a cousin of mine and a very promising young man, but has accidentally, as appears, been thrown out of the fights in New Mexico & California. He is a graduate of West Point & stood high. When he graduated, five years ago, he was appointed 2d Lieut. in Dragoons, at my instance, and has been in active

service on the Western frontier ever since & stands high. He is now 1st Lieut. & in command of the Company of Dragoons stationed at *Fort Gibson*,⁹ & he merely desires to be transferred to more active service, either under Scott or Taylor. He also mentions in his letter an officer who has a wife at Fort Gibson, and who is perfectly willing to exchange positions with him, he being at Buena Vista. His name is *Lieut.* Buford of the same Regt. of Dragoons as Lieut P. Noble, and as I understand is willing to return to his wife.¹⁰

If you *could make the transfer or sanction it* I would be highly gratified. The other letter is from Lieut. O'Bannon¹¹ of the So. Ca. volunteers, who desires to be continued in the Regular service if our Regt. is discharged. His family are very highly respectable people.

By the by if our Regt. are discharged, would it not be well to give the officers the option of being retained in the Regular service? If they are transferred to a new Regt. to be raised as volunteers it will check volunteering as other young men would desire positions in a new regt. Excuse my writing too long.

F. W. PICKENS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Pickens (1807–69), a South Carolina lawyer and planter, served as a Nullifier in the state legislature, 1832–33, and as a Nullifier and then a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1834–43. He then served in the state senate, 1844–46, and later became U.S. minister to Russia, 1858–60. As South Carolina governor after secession, 1860–62, he demanded the federal surrender of Fort Sumter and ordered the firing on the *Star of the West*, the ship coming to resupply it.

2. Edgewood, near Edgefield, S.C., was Pickens's plantation.

3. For Robert J. Walker's "annual report on the state of the finances," dated December 8, 1847, see House Executive Document No. 6, 30th Congress, 1st Session.

4. Pickens alludes to the Wilmot Proviso.

5. Reference is to Henry Clay's antiwar speech and resolutions of November 13, 1847, in Lexington, Ky.

6. Letter not found. Charles H. Pratt (?–1847), a private in Company F of South Carolina's Palmetto Regiment, which had formed in December 1846, was severely wounded on August 20, 1847, in the Battle of Churubusco.

7. Letters not found.

8. Patrick Noble, Jr., (1821–48) son of a South Carolina governor and an 1842 U.S. Military Academy graduate, was promoted to first lieutenant in the First Dragoon Regiment in December 1846. Between 1843 and 1846 he had served at frontier posts including Forts Croghan and Des Moines, Iowa Terr., and Fort Leavenworth, in unorganized territory that later became Kansas. Sent to New Mexico in 1846, he was assigned to Fort Gibson, Indian Terr., in 1847, and Jefferson Barracks, Mo., in 1848. He died on December 27, 1848.

9. The army built Cantonment Gibson in 1824 near the mouth of the Grand River. Initially the United States' westernmost military post, it was early on part of Arkansas Territory and later part of Indian Territory, today's Oklahoma. Named for Commissary Gen. George Gibson, it became the last post on the route of forced migration for eastern Indians. In 1832 it was renamed Fort Gibson and in 1833 the newly created First Dragoon Regiment was assigned to it.

10. Kentuckian Abraham Buford (1820–84), an 1841 U.S. Military Academy graduate, was promoted to first lieutenant in the First Dragoons the same day as Noble. Brevetted captain for his service at Buena Vista in February 1847, he served several stints at Fort Gibson between 1842 and 1846. He was returned there in 1848, but that July was sent to New Mexico, where he remained until 1852. During the Civil War, he served the Confederacy as a brigadier general. Amanda Harris (1825–79), from Canajoharie, N.Y., married him in 1845. They met at Fort Gibson, where she was visiting her brother, Arnold S. Harris, U.S. agent for removing the Choctaw. In 1850 she lived in Washington City with their one-year-old son.

11. Augustus B. O'Bannon (c. 1812 or c. 1816–1860s?), of Barnwell Court House, S.C., was first lieutenant of Company K of the Palmetto Regiment. He suffered a minor wound at the Battle of Chapultepec. His regiment disbanded in June and July 1848; Polk did not appoint him to the regular army.

TO GIDEON J. PILLOW

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Decr. 19th 1847¹

Your letter of the 28th of October² was received a few days since, when I was overwhelmed by my official duties, which have been very great since Congress convened. I have seized the first moment of leisure to read it carefully, and am constrained to say that I cannot express to you in terms too strong, my unqualified condemnation of the secret negotiation or correspondence, which from your statement I suppose took place at Puebla, between *Genl. Scott* and *Mr Trist* on the one part, and *Genl. Santa Anna*, through his agents on the other, by which it was contemplated that a million of Dollars was to be paid to the latter, in consideration that he would make peace.³ Neither *Genl. Scott*, *Mr Trist*, or any one else, possessed the slightest authority for any such proceeding. No such idea was ever thought of, or conceived by me, or by any member of my administration. Not the slightest allusion has been made to it, in any of the official despatches arrived either from *Genl. Scott* or *Mr Trist*. Rumours and published letters from the army, had reached here, and although at first discredited, the truth has now assumed such a force, that *Genl. Scott* and *Mr Trist*, must be called upon for an explanation of the error which has been committed. *Mr Trist* went out with *specific written instructions*,⁴ and he possessed none other. These were

in their nature *confidential*, but as he was to take up his position with the Head Quarters of the army,⁵ it was deemed proper that he should communicate them *confidentially* to *Genl. Scott*, and he was authorized to do so. He was permitted also to communicate them in *like confidence* to *yourself, Genl. Shields*,⁶ and such other of the General officers as he might deem proper, but no idea was ever conceived, that he would think for a moment of disregarding or transcending them. It was supposed that it might possibly aid him in carrying out his *written instructions*, to consult *confidentially*, with some of the General Officers, in addition to *Genl. Scott*, and this was my view, when I wrote you in April and May last, and informed you of the object of his mission.⁷ I have not learned whether he ever did communicate his *written instructions* to *yourself Genl. Shields*, or any other of the General officers. Had you seen them, you would have discovered, that he took with the projet of a Treaty, already drawn up, that his instructions were specific and limited, and that he possessed no such discretionary power, as it would seem he manifested a willingness to exercise. I infer from Your letter that after a correspondence had been assumed on the subject, by *Genl. Scott* and *Mr Trist* or by one of them, you were consulted by them, and I deeply regret that you should in the first instance, have given to it, the countenance even of your reluctant assent. Your subsequent protest against it, when you had a better understanding of its character was right, and I can only regret that it had not been made in the first instance. I am amazed that a proceeding so unwarrantable, and calculated so seriously to effect the National character, should ever have been conceived or suggested. Such an application of public money, had not been authorized by Congress, and never should have been; was never contemplated, and could never have been approved by me, or by any member of my administration. Your duties I know were purely military and in a subordinate command. You possessed I know no power over the subject, but your great error consists in having given an opinion, or yielded your reluctant assent, in the first instance to such a proposition, when you were consulted by others. I am gratified that you afterwards took a different and a correct view of the matter, and protested against it.

The official reports of the late battles in which you acted so prominent and gallant a part, are highly creditable to you, and must be gratifying to your friends. In all the engagements, since the landing of the army at Vera Cruz, *Genl. Scott* speaks, in high terms in his Reports, of your Military conduct. If injustice shall be done you in the army or elsewhere, the power, of truth, will ultimately vindicate your reputation. My time is so much and so constantly occupied with my official duties, that I must postpone an answer to the other portions of your letter. *Genls.*

*Quitman*⁸ & *Shields* are expected here in a few days; *Cols. Andrews* and *Moore*⁹ arrived a few days ago.

I received letters from Columbia, a few days ago.¹⁰ No mention was made of your family, & I presume therefore, they were in usual health.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Mexico City and marked “(*Private & unofficial*).”

1. According to his diary, Polk, in consultation with James Buchanan, William L. Marcy, John Y. Mason, and Nathan Clifford, slightly edited this letter on December 20.

2. Letter not found.

3. See letter and notes in Thomas P. Moore to Polk, November 23, 1847.

4. See letter and notes in Polk to William O. Butler, August 7, 1847.

5. When Nicholas P. Trist went to Mexico in April 1847, the army's headquarters lay at Veracruz. Three months before Polk wrote this letter, headquarters—and Trist—reached Mexico City.

6. James Shields.

7. Polk to Pillow, April 14, 1847; Polk to Pillow, May 18, 1847; Polk to Pillow, May 25, 1847 (addressed to New Orleans).

8. John A. Quitman.

9. Timothy P. Andrews and Thomas P. Moore.

10. No letters from Columbia, Tenn., received within a month before Polk wrote this letter have been found.

FROM HUPAKINYAN AND INYANGMANI¹

Great Father

Lacqui parle² Dec. 20. 1847³

We shake hands with you and wish to speak to you of one thing that makes us sad.

On the north east and north the boundary line of our country runs from, what is called, The Great stone, and the lake where the Eagles hatch (on the east side of the Mississippi) along the river Isankarpapi⁴ (west of the Mississippi) to the Island of Pines. But the white man who run the line when he had started on it was found by the Chippewas and conducted through the middle of our country, and they say it is theirs. When the line was run no Dakota was along.⁵ Now the Chippewas have sold that land, and we very much forbid it.⁶ We wish you also to forbid it for us. The Mdewakantonwans⁷ sold a piece of our land (on the east of the Mississippi) and now the Chippewas have sold a piece that belongs to us (on the west of that river). This we very much dislike. We wish you to help us and put a stop to it.

We listen to your counsel and do not hunt in the Chippewa country but the Chippewas come and stay in ours. This we dislike and we wish you to put a stop to it.

Signed by order of the soldiers⁸

HUPAKINYAN

INYANĠMANI⁹

L, translation, in Stephen R. Riggs's hand. Riggs enclosed the L (in Dakota), in Riggs's hand, and this translation, which he addressed to Washington City, in Riggs to William L. Marcy, December 22, 1847. All three letters are in DNA-RG 75, filed erroneously with the 1848 letters received by the Office of Indian Affairs from the St. Peter's Agency. Es in unknown hands to Riggs's letter to Marcy: "*St. Peters*"; "Civilization." From John C. Mullan's AE to Riggs's letter to Marcy: received by Indian Department "From War Dept" March 1, 1848. See also copy and translations, c. 1934. L, copy, in original Dakota ("Old Santee Sioux"), with transliteration into later form of Dakota ("modern Santee"), translation into English, and notes, all in Ivan Drift's hand; L, translation, in Benjamin McBride, Sr.'s hand; and L, translation, in Drift's hand (appended to McBride's translation). DSI-NAA.

1. Letter and signatures written by Stephen R. Riggs; Inyanġmani, at least, never learned to write. Hupakinyan (Flying Entrance [of the camp]), according to the note beside the signatures on Riggs's L, translation, was a Wahpeton Dakota chief. Inyanġmani (or Ijyangmani, or Iyangmani, "Running Walker") (c. 1810–1873), also called the Big Gun, was a chief of the Wahpeton at Lac qui Parle, apparently since the 1830s. In 1846 or 1847, amid cattle killings by Dakotas to express growing resentment of white missionaries' presence, he and other leaders arranged with Stephen R. Riggs for Stephen and wife Mary Ann Clark Longley Riggs to remain at Lac qui Parle and receive free water, firewood, grass, and farmland in exchange for teaching the Dakota children and paying for wood to build the whites' homes. Inyanġmani was among the signers of an 1851 treaty between the Sisseton and Wahpeton and the U.S. government. Four of his daughters married Taoyateduta (His Red Nation), also known as Little Crow, the Dakota's leader in the U.S.-Dakota War of 1862.

2. Lac qui Parle, or Mde Iyedarj (The Lake That Talks), on the Minnesota River, was the location of a Wahpeton Dakota village. Located in unorganized territory at the time of this letter, it was near the western border of modern-day Minnesota. From 1835 to 1854, the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions operated a Christian mission, including a day school for Dakota children, across the river from the village. The Riggses served there in 1837–43 and 1846–54. Stephen Riggs and other missionaries developed a writing system for the Dakota language and translated parts of the Bible into Dakota; in 1852 he completed an English-Dakota dictionary.

3. Place and date appear in Riggs's L, translation, but not in L.

4. Isankarpapi, or Isaᅇkarparapi, translates, "They Throw (or Cover) Knife."

Inkanxidau nakaha
nape onriyuzapi ga taku wacin
iyo onkiyapige onkoniciyakapido
Inyantankayanke ca mde ruyanya ga
Isankarpapi ga iwajiwita hehanyan
mitawa & Hupakinyan tuka
Isantankuwan iwanyeg yapi ga
hiyaya tuka raratonwan iyeyapi
ga makooce mitawa kin cokaya
Shiyupi ga hehanyan tawapi
kuya ga wiyopeyapi he wacin
iyowakipi ca he ~~onkot~~ onkot
niciyakapi he teonrindapi nix
teonye cirindapi kte makooce mita
wakin onppa mde wakantonwan wiyope
makiye ca Ake ranantonwan onppa wiyope
makiye tuka hantuge he wacin
onmakiye ca temicirindawo

Dakota-language L, in Stephen R. Riggs's hand, of Hupakinyan and Inyanġmani to James K. Polk, December 20, 1847. National Archives, Records of the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

dakota tuwedan ope yui ga
he on ~~ya to~~ he con pi
Iyae cin ana ong optan pi tu ka
Wan ton wa ~~shako ce an~~ kita wa
pi kin in ohimri on pi ere he iyo
on kipi pi yui he te on ye ci rinda
pi kte on kipi rgr ~~wa to~~ kin ^{tonjan tapnapecep}
sanpa on kipi kte mi he may ron
hta

Kerpakinyan
Inyang maru

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[21. Nov. 1848]

5. In 1835, ten years after the signing of the Treaty of Prairie du Chien, Jonathan L. Bean, with a military escort, surveyed part of the boundary it stipulated between Dakota and Chippewa land. He covered the approximately 250 miles from the Chippewa River in today's Wisconsin to Otter Tail Lake in today's Minnesota. The troops and interpreters, however, left at that point, preventing him—fearful of violence by Indians—from continuing toward the Sauk River. Meanwhile, dissatisfied Indians removed boundary markers that he had laid down. Both Dakotas and Chippewas accompanied Bean for at least part of the journey. A group led by Mdewakanton Dakota chief Ah no ke nan gee stayed with Bean almost to the journey's end, before running out of supplies. Bean (1800–1853), a Pennsylvanian, attended the U.S. Military Academy, 1818–20. He served as sub-agent for the Iowa Indians, in Missouri, 1827–28; as sub-agent for the Sioux, on the Upper Missouri River, 1828–34; in the army as a captain of dragoons, 1836–37; and as agent for several Indian peoples, at Council Bluffs, Iowa Terr., 1845–46, before retiring in St. Louis.

6. Stephen Riggs explains these circumstances in the letter—originally addressed to Polk but then readdressed to William L. Marcy—of December 22, 1847, in which he enclosed this letter. The two Chippewa-U.S. treaties signed in August 1847 (ratified in 1848) ceded, for the relocation of the Winnebago, land still claimed by the Dakota: “from the place, where the line run by the U.S. . . . crosses the Mississippi, about one days journey or thirty miles farther north.” The Dakota, according to Riggs, claim to have agreed with the Chippewa before Bean's survey to “divide the difference” over that disputed land. They recall that Dakotas accompanied Bean until he crossed to the west of the Mississippi; thereafter only Chippewas “continued with the party and guided them along by the utmost limit claimed by themselves.” Riggs worries that, unless the United States offers the Dakota at least “a small remuneration,” their land claim will lead to violence between them and the Winnebago. ALS. DNA-RG 75.

7. “Mdewakantonwan” means “Mdewakanton people.”

8. Closing appears in Riggs's L, translation, but not in L.

9. Signatures transcribed from L; Riggs's L, translation, gives them as “Noupakinyan” and “Inyang mani” and adds “Chiefs of the Warpetonians” to their right.

TO EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Dear Sir:

Washington City Decr. 20th 1847

I have only time to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 23rd ultimo, and to say in reply, that the lands, near Bolivar, to which you refer, belong, to *Marshall T. Polk Jr.* and, to his half brothers & sisters, by the second, marriage of his mother.¹ *Marshall* owns an undivided half of the land, and an undivided fourth or fifth of the other half. I will advise him, when he arrives at full-age, to have a division, or to have the lands sold and divide the proceeds. *Marshall* will be 17. years old in May next.

I am perfectly satisfied that you should cultivate the land, as you suggest, instead of renting it out as heretofore to others. I leave it intirely to your own judgment, whether more of the land should be cleared or not. If you think it will improve the value of the land to the minors who own it, you can have it done. Do with it, in this respect, as you would, if it were your own, and I am sure you will do right.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Bolivar, Tenn.

1. Laura Theresa Wilson (1808–48), daughter of North Carolina judge Joseph Wilson, married Polk's brother Marshall T. at Charlotte, N.C., in 1827. After his 1831 death, she married Morganton, N.C., physician William C. Tate in 1836. She died in Morganton in June 1848 after a long illness. She and William had eight children: Emma M. (1837–1915), Joseph W. (1839–1911), Hugh W. (1840–1908), Catherine E. (1841–1918), William C., Jr. (1842?–1849), Robert A. (1844–1923), James Knox Polk (1845–1902), and Laura O. (1847–77).

FROM JOHN NORVELL¹

Dear Sir,

Detroit, Dec. 20, 1847

I have had the honour to receive the message of the President, under your frank, transmitted to congress at the beginning of its present session.

In all respects, on all points touched in the message, it meets precisely the views which I have always entertained in regard to the great interests of the country, as well as its honour and reputation. It is universally satisfactory to the democratic party in this region of country. The Mexican subject is treated in the most masterly manner; and I have never seen so glowing or glorious a picture drawn of the resources, developements, and progress in prosperity, and to expanded and expanding greatness, of this mighty country, as that portrayed in the message. The present administration, closing as it has so far proceeded, cannot fail to shine with unsurpassed lustre in history, and in the eyes of the whole country, when the party feelings of the day shall have passed away, and patriotism shall have gained, as it always does in time gain, the ascendancy over all evanescent considerations.

It was proper that the President should disclaim, and no doubt he sincerely disclaimed, any design whatever to annihilate the Mexican republic, as an independent government: And yet the infatuation of that foolish people, and their military leaders and usurpers, seems seriously to menace² that result. It appears at present that nothing short of that will secure our peace and permanent safety.

JOHN NORVELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received January 10, 1848; Walker wrote but then he or Polk struck out “*Private.*”

1. Norvell (1789–1850), a former newspaper editor in Maryland and Pennsylvania, moved to Michigan Territory in 1832. A Democrat, he served in the state constitutional convention, 1835; in the U.S. Senate, 1837–41; in the state senate, 1841; and in the state house, 1842. Appointed by Polk and reappointed by Pres. Zachary Taylor, he served as U.S. attorney for Michigan, 1846–50.

2. In a now-obsolete usage, the verb “menace” meant “threaten.”

FROM PICKETT, PERKINS & CO.

Dear Sir

New Orleans Dec. 20th 1847

Your favor of 24th ult. came duly to hand. We are yet without any advice of the shipment of your crop of cotton, but presume it will make its appearance when a rise in the Yallobusha river will admit of its being shipped. We shall bear in mind to inform you of its arrival in this market, in order that you may give your further instructions touching its sale. In the mean time, we shall keep it covered by insurance while in store, and also against the dangers of the river in its transportation as you desire.

The late European accts. slightly affected our market unfavorably for a day or two only, which slight decline has been fully recovered & prices now are *very firm* at 6 3/4 for *middling*. The style of your cotton last year, was strictly middling to good middling, and would be worth at present in our market 6 7/8 @ 7 ct.

We hand you herein an invoice of a set of Blacksmith’s tools, ordered for you by one Mr. Walker which we have shipped to your plantation, care of T W Beale Troy Missis. amt. of same at your debit \$57.57.¹

We delayed the shipment of these articles some time after receiving Mr. Walker’s order, waiting a suitable conveyance, as he at first requested. We now ship them under the expectation that they will have to be reshiped on Keel Boats in order to reach Troy.

PICKETT, PERKINS & CO

L in William S. Pickett’s hand. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “pt Mail.” From Polk’s AE: received December 30, 1847; “Relates to my Private Business.”

1. The invoice is dated December 18, 1847. D in William S. Pickett’s hand. DLC–JKP. References are to Thomas W. Beale and, probably, James Walker of Tennessee.

FROM WILLIAM D. MOSELEY¹

My old friend,

Tallahassee [Fla.] Dec 21. 1847

I re[ceive]d² by the mail of the 15th inst your late Message to Congress; forwarded under your well known Frank.

I feel much obliged to you, for this renewed memento of your kind feelings towards me. I need not assure you, that I highly approve it. This approval you will hear from the entire *American People* (as contradistinguished, from the Mexico-American); the latter of whom, will of course assail it; as they *ever have*; whatever takes sides with their country, against foreigners.

I have told you from the beginning, that the *genuine American People*; would always support you, in the position which you took in regard to Mexico. Recent demonstrations, strengthen that opinion.

As to your Message, (if my opinion is worth anything to you) I solemnly declare (so highly am I pleased with it) that if authorised by you, there is not one sentiment which it contains, that I would reject—on the contrary, I endorse, with unqualified approbation, the entire document—so far indeed, that I would not dot an *I*, or cross a —*T*— from the first to the last line; which you have left undotted,³ or not crossed.

W. D. MOSELEY

P.S. The democrats dropt to sleep last summer and before they awaked, that artful partisan and Demagogue C___l,⁴ had them tied head and foot. The result is; that the Feds have a majority in the Genl. Assembly. They have made several cowardly attacks upon me, but I feel invulnerable; and have defyed their utmost malice.⁵

I think, Master Cabell's late vote *for Winthrop*⁶ has done his business in Florida. At all events, it shall, be trumpeted from one end of the state, to the other. We are organizing our state ticket: for Govr. member to Congress, &c. &c.; and the way we will give it to the Mexico-American; abolitionist, Wilmot-Proviso—Feds, will be a caution to them, in all after time. *W.D.M*

PS. I have coined several words, in the preceeding epistle: such for instance, as “undotted”; and sundry others; but as I have high authority for such innovations; I *plead it*, in Justifacation. *W.D.M*

[P.S.] A petition has been forwarded to you in behalf of a very worthy man in this place by the name of Marshall, for an appointmnt of clerk, in some one of the departments.⁷ I am apprised that such appointmnts are entrusted to the heads of the Departments: but I feel confident

nonetheless: that your wishes as to appointments, would not be disregarded. The petitioner is entirely worthy of the appointment which his friends have solicited for him. *W.D.M*

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*Private*” on the cover. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received January 12, 1848; “*Private.*”

1. Moseley (1795–1863) was Polk’s classmate—and for some period his roommate—at the University of North Carolina. He served in the North Carolina Senate, 1829–37, but lost his gubernatorial race in 1835. He subsequently moved to Florida, where he served in the territory’s legislature and as the state’s first governor, 1845–49.

2. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

3. Though Moseley indicates otherwise in his second postscript, “undotted” had been used in this sense since at least 1816 and in another since the eighteenth century.

4. Lawyer and planter Edward C. Cabell (1816–96) represented the new state of Florida as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1845–46 and 1847–53. (His first election was successfully contested by Democrat William H. Brockenbrough but voters sent him back to Washington City the next year.) Born and educated in Virginia, he had moved in 1837 to Florida Territory, where he operated a Jefferson County cotton plantation and was a delegate to the state constitutional convention, 1838.

5. Florida’s legislative elections of October 4, 1847, resulted in Whig majorities in both the state house and senate. In this and the following paragraph Moseley refers to the 1848 gubernatorial and congressional elections.

6. Cabell voted for Robert C. Winthrop, the successful candidate, for Speaker of the House on December 6. Winthrop (1809–94), born in Boston, studied law with Daniel Webster. A Whig, he served in the Massachusetts House, 1835–40 (as Speaker, 1838–40); the U.S. House, 1840–42 and 1842–50 (as Speaker, 1847–49); and the U.S. Senate—replacing Webster, who had resigned—1850–51.

7. Petition not found.

FROM ROBERT B. REYNOLDS¹

Mr President:

Vera Cruz Decr. 21. 1847

Presuming upon an old acquaintance, I perpetrate a few remarks to you, although, I regret to trespass upon your valuable time.

I reached here in mid summer, leaving New Orleans in July, the yellow fever was raging, attacked our friend Col. Louis D. Wilson² & carried him off, much to my regret. I was near going the same road, but by the skill & kind attention of Dr McFarlane,³ I was spared. Thanks to your excellent selection. Dr Barton⁴ also stands high in my estimation and they were the only surgeons here, during the height of the pestilence of last summer, that were capable of doing good services. The Hospitable⁵ here was in wretched condition & old Govr. Wilson, (thanks to you for

his removal)⁶ never visited them or reviewed the troops during the summer, save only when he was forced to the Hospital to muster the officers for payment, which was at the end of every two months. Drs Barton & McFarlane did good service, they put their portion of the Hospital in good condition. But Dr Porter⁷ failed signally, in my opinion to give satisfaction. The reports from the up country Hospitals are sad in deed. Hundreds are discharged (inter nos)⁸ because the surgeons prefer to get clean of them & save themselves from further trouble.

At this place no discipline was enacted here, until the arrival of Col D. S. Miles⁹ & he has punctually & faithfully attended to the discipline of the troops and the defence of the city, both neglected before. I understand Govr. Henry Wilson has recommended his officers for brevets, but did not mention the name of Col Miles. Why so, I cannot imagine. Certainly he is more entitled to a brevet (colonelcy) than any officer stationed here.

Whilst on the subject of brevets; I would most *respectfully* and *earnestly* recommend young Tom. Claiborne¹⁰ for a brevet for his good conduct in the fight, wherein Capt Walker¹¹ was killed, at Huamantla.¹² He captured a gun there.¹³

As to Genl. Pillow,¹⁴ I am so far from him, as to be unable to speak of him from personal knowledge. You have put him on the highest point possible & he done his duty. Scott charges him with disrespect, with disclosing the plans of the campaigns &c, by letter &c and forty or fifty other little frivolous charges. He has (Pillow) acted very well. Scott hopes to defeat his confirmation by the Senate.¹⁵ If so, he will be relieved from prosecuting Pillow further. I have not a doubt, but that Scott is trying to persecute Pillow, and that Mr. Trist is at the bottom of it. Every body here, speak in rather uncomplimentary terms of Trist.

But I am dwelling too long & trespassing too much on your time.

I am pleased that the war is to be changed in its policy and that Mr Clay has only excited the government to renewed vigor, so as to close the War before a new administration comes in.¹⁶ It only requires the entire country to be conquered and the war to be closed during your administration, to make it the most eventful in the history of the U. States.

Dr Ramsey¹⁷ declined to accept the commission you tendered him with regret. He is a very deserving gentleman and if your Excellency has a boundary to locate between the United States and Mexico, I hope you will put the Doctor on that duty & send me along as Paymaster to the corps.

R B REYNO[LDS]¹⁸

1. Reynolds (1811–96), a Knoxville, Tenn., lawyer and Democrat, served as state attorney general for a district in East Tennessee, 1839–45. He joined the army as a captain and assistant quartermaster of volunteers in June 1846, then became an additional paymaster in March 1847 and a major and paymaster in March 1849. He served until 1861.

2. Louis D. Wilson (1789–1847) was a politician and merchant from Edgecombe County, N.C. He became captain of Company A of the North Carolina Infantry Regiment, created in Edgecombe County, on January 5, 1847. Made a colonel in the regular army in March, he took command of the Twelfth Infantry Regiment on April 9. He died on August 12 of yellow fever. He had served in the North Carolina House, 1815–19, and Senate, 1820, 1824–33, and 1838–47, and had held various other public offices in the state.

3. James S. McFarlane (1800–1862), a New Orleans physician and proprietor of McFarlane's Hospital, was a native of South Carolina and an 1821 medical graduate of Columbia College, New York City. A local Democratic politician, in 1844 he enrolled 2,700 new voters in Louisiana. Owing to his expertise on yellow fever—including vomito, a virulent form that usually produces black vomit and from which U.S. soldiers suffered in Mexico—Polk appointed him an army surgeon on May 20, 1847. He resigned on January 29, 1848.

4. Edward H. Barton (1795–1859), born in Maryland or Virginia, was appointed an army surgeon on March 3, 1847, and assigned to the Third Dragoon Regiment on April 9. He treated soldiers suffering from vomito in Veracruz, then went into Mexico's interior. He resigned the same day as McFarlane. A prolific medical writer with expertise in yellow fever and sanitation, Barton was trained at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, and taught at the Medical College of Louisiana (now Tulane University), New Orleans, 1835–40, the last four years as its dean.

5. Reynolds probably meant to write "Hospital."

6. Henry Wilson (1792–1872), of Pennsylvania, had served in the army almost continuously since 1813. He was promoted to lieutenant colonel in command of the First Infantry Regiment in 1842 and brevetted colonel for his service at Monterrey in 1846. Wilson served as civil and military governor of Veracruz, March–December 1847. The War Department, dissatisfied with his performance, ordered his replacement in November. Gen. James Bankhead took over on December 16 but turned over the post to Gen. David E. Twiggs a week later. Wilson, however, held the post again, March–June 1848.

7. Connecticut native John B. Porter (1804–69) was an army surgeon based, March 1847–February 1848, at Veracruz. After being recruited to the army from civilian life, he had, in 1833, been appointed an assistant surgeon. In October 1846 he was promoted to surgeon at the rank of major. In Veracruz Porter established a military hospital in a former Franciscan convent, managed some twenty army surgeons, and oversaw most medical and sanitation matters. Porter later drew on those experiences in an article, "Medical and Surgical Notes of Campaigns in the War with Mexico, during the years 1845, 1846, 1847, and 1848," 5 pts., *American Journal of the Medical Sciences*, new

ser., 23 (January 1852), pp. 13–37; 24 (July 1852), pp. 15–30; 25 (January 1853), pp. 25–42; 26 (October 1853), pp. 297–333; 35 (April 1858), pp. 347–52.

8. Latin expression meaning “between ourselves.”

9. Marylander Dixon S. Miles (1804–62) graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1824. Brevetted major for defending Fort Brown, Tex., in May 1846 and lieutenant colonel for his service at Monterrey that September, he attained the permanent rank of major, in the Fifth Infantry Regiment, on February 16, 1847. Miles was commandant at Veracruz, August 11–December 23, 1847, and civil and military governor of Jalapa, July 1848. He did not, despite Reynolds’s recommendation, win another brevet.

10. Thomas Claiborne, Jr., (1823–1911) born in Nashville, practiced law there and, after 1843, in Trenton, Tenn., where he also edited the *True American*. A clerk in the Register’s Office of the U.S. Treasury Department, 1845–46, he joined the army’s mounted riflemen in May 1846. Promoted from second to first lieutenant in February 1847, he was—as Reynolds here recommends—in August 1848 awarded a brevet to captain for gallantry at Huamantla, effective October 9, 1847.

11. Born in Maryland, Samuel H. Walker (1815 or 1817–1847) served in the army in Florida in 1836 and moved to Texas in 1842. There he participated in the Texas war for independence and, as a Texas Ranger, fought Comanches. He again enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1845, serving in the Mexican War as a private and scout under Zachary Taylor, as captain of a Texas Ranger company, as lieutenant colonel of the First Texas Mounted Rifle Regiment, and, finally, as captain of Claiborne’s company in the U.S. Mounted Rifle Regiment. He also proposed gun improvements that led to the Walker Colt revolver.

12. On October 9, 1847, Mexican forces under General Santa Anna tried to halt Americans under Gen. Joseph Lane at Huamantla before they could relieve U.S. troops under siege at Puebla. The Americans won the battle but Walker, whose mounted riflemen reached Huamantla first, was killed. At Lane’s urging, U.S. soldiers retaliated by murdering and raping the town’s residents and stealing and destroying property.

13. Reynolds may refer to the shotgun enclosed in Lane to Polk, c. October 20, 1847, though Walker’s men also captured Mexican canons at Huamantla.

14. Gideon J. Pillow.

15. The Senate approved Pillow’s promotion to major general—made by Polk on April 13, 1847—on July 17, 1848.

16. Reference is to Henry Clay’s antiwar speech of November 13, 1847, in Lexington, Ky.

17. James G. M. Ramsey.

18. Letters cut off side of page.

FROM JAMES W. McCLUNG¹

Dear Sir,

Montgomery [Ala.]² Decr 22nd 1847

The events which are transpiring here, and which have recently transpired may be interesting to you, and I have therefore determined to give you a short sketch of them, and of the position of Alabama as respects national affairs.

You may have seen that there have been some demonstrations here, and at Mobile, in favor of Genl Taylor for the Presidency.³ To a distant observer these indications might seem to be emanating from the people, irrespective of party—not so. The democratic party stands on its principles, and would trust no man who has such indefinite ideas of constitutional law, as the General seems to entertain. Many of the whigs are unwilling to identify themselves with the fortunes of Mr Clay, since his late speech⁴; and as a man *without principles*, suits them as well as one with bad ones, as southern men, they have hoisted the Taylor flag in the vain hope of drawing to their support, the common people, who may be attracted by the glare of military glory. In this they will be mistaken. Only two democrats of any character will be found with them—the rank and file will vote for the regular nominee of the democratic party, if sound on the subject of slavery—this will be a *sine qua non*.⁵ Before the adjournment of our General Assembly, delegates will be chosen to attend a national convention.⁶ Thus you may rest assured, Alabama will stand erect on her principles.

The recent election of Mr Lewis⁷ must not be misunderstood at Washington. He was the late incumbent. He had supported the administration in relation to the War, and other measures of importance—Had said publicly through the papers, that if he had been in his seat he would have voted against the ostracism of Mr Ritchie,⁸ and expressed a determination to support the nominee of a convention. All this he will do, for I assure you that he possesses the instinct of self preservation in an eminent degree. He was elected too by the democratic party, having only received the aid of four whigs representing democratic counties. If he had been defeated, his thirty two chivalry friends, representing the southern counties, would no longer have remained in a party, to be counted in favor of others, professing to have no confidence in them. Thus, though Alabama could always be counted for us in contest for President, the General Assembly would for many years, have been against us. This arises from the fact, that our strength is concentrated in the northern counties. The southern democrats, (all Lewis's friends) will now remain true to the cause. I supported Mr Lewis, because I knew that his clansmen could no longer be counted for us, if their chief

was dishonored. Still I would not have done so, if he had not sworn fealty to the administration. He will now go as far as *you* desire, on the war question; On the other questions he is as you know reliable.

I must say to you in confidence, and this is the main object of my letter, (unknown however to Lewis) that the friends of Col King⁹ succeeded in making the impression on many of the members, that *his success, was an administration measure*. Now I know, and so said to Lewis, that *you* took no part. If you should feel it a duty to yourself to disabuse his mind on this subject, simply mention it as having been communicated by a friend, without intimating to him the source of your information. Sanford of the Mobile Register,¹⁰ spoke of Col King in his paper, as "the administration candidate." He has no sense, and ought not to be trusted with types.

Bagby¹¹ was here some eight or ten days. From great pecuniary distress, he has so excited the sympathies of all parties, that in delicacy to him, no other senator will probably be elected this winter. Notwithstanding this, it is a known fact, that there are not twenty members who would vote for his re-election. It is the general impression here, that his services have been duly appreciated at Washington, and that his friends can there procure for him, some appointment which would afford him the means of living. He thinks that if the election should now be brought on, it would place him, in this respect, in an unfavorable position.

All parties here desire that something should be done for him, and would if necessary, unite in a written request to that effect. If this should be done, a successor would be elected by the present Legislature, (most probably) both personally and politically friendly to *you, and to your administration*. If the election should not be made this winter, the whigs may two years hence, have a majority in the state senate. *We* now have only a majority of one. Consequently they might defeat, or control the election. We will not adjourn earlier than the first of February.

Gov. Clay¹² is here waiting for the troubling of the waters. I know his cormorant appetite for Office, and have no doubt of his having annoyed you with importunities on this subject. I will do him the justice to say, that politically he is true—but he is out of *position*. His egotism has become his prominent characteristic, and he seems to fast advancing to a state of premature senility.

I do not expect or desire an answer to this hasty letter. It was only written to give you some reliable information relative to Alabama affairs.

Permit me to thank you as I do sincerely, for your kind attention to my personal requests,¹³ and to assure you, that I desire nothing so

much as the success of your administration, the whole of which I most cordially approve.

J W McCLUNG

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. McClung (1798–1848), born in Knoxville, Tenn., graduated from the University of North Carolina shortly after Polk matriculated there in 1816. He became a Huntsville, Ala., lawyer and served in the Alabama House, 1822, 1826, 1835, 1837–38, 1842, and 1844 (sometimes as Speaker), and Senate, 1845–48. He ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1841 as a Whig-leaning independent but became a Democrat in his later years.

2. State identified through content analysis.

3. A Zachary Taylor meeting was held in Mobile, Ala., on July 2, 1847. Several such meetings were held in Montgomery in late 1847, including on December 17.

4. Reference is to Henry Clay's antiwar speech of November 13, 1847, in Lexington, Ky.

5. Latin expression meaning "essential condition."

6. The Alabama Democratic State Convention, held in Montgomery on February 14–15, 1848, chose delegates to the Democratic National Convention.

7. Sen. Dixon H. Lewis.

8. The U.S. Senate, on February 18, 1847, passed a resolution banning the editors of the *Washington Union*, Thomas Ritchie and John P. Heiss, from the Senate floor. The ban was a response to an article in the *Daily Union* of February 9 that criticized Senate opposition to the Mexican War and, specifically, to the Ten Regiment Bill.

9. William R. King.

10. Connecticut native Thaddeus Sanford (1790–1867) as a young man pursued commercial enterprises in New York City and Mobile, Ala. He owned and edited the *Mobile Register*, 1828–37; repurchased that newspaper in 1841; and, after combining it with other local publications, renamed it the *Mobile Register and Journal*. Under his direction, which stretched into the mid-1850s, the paper became associated with proslavery and Democratic party politics and employed innovative uses of the telegraph in newsgathering. Sanford also served as president of the state bank of Mobile, 1833–44.

11. Democrat Arthur P. Bagby (1794–1858) served as Alabama governor, 1837–41, and U.S. senator, 1841–48. Appointed by Polk, he was minister to Russia, June 1848–May 1849. King replaced him in the Senate.

12. Huntsville, Ala., lawyer and Democrat Clement Comer Clay (1789–1866)—not to be confused with his son, future U.S. senator Clement Claiborne Clay—was born in Virginia and educated in Knoxville, Tenn. He served on the Alabama territorial council, 1817–18; as a state circuit court judge, 1819–20; as state chief justice, 1820–23; as Speaker of the state house, 1828; in the U.S. House, 1829–35; as governor, 1835–37; in the U.S. Senate, 1837–41; and as associate judge of the state supreme court, 1843.

13. Letters, if any, not found.

that I cannot be mistaken in the entire propriety and expediency of this step. Besides being an able man, he is such a friend as will give you the advantage of any position which is conferred upon him. The solicitude which I have in this, is enhanced from the fact of it being my station for duty, and in purposing to be of use to my friends in the states next summer, I do not wish to fall in to the hands of some commander who will regard my political preferences as the occasion for a system of persecution that is dealt most unsparingly by most of the officers who have attained rank by long service, upon such as favour the party to which I am attached and of which you have been a faithful exponent.

VICTOR E PIOLLET

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Victor E. Piollet (1812–90), a farmer from Wysox, Penn., served in the Pennsylvania House, 1846–47. Polk appointed him an army paymaster on June 17, 1847. He served until March 4, 1849.

2. Reference is to Henry Clay's antiwar speech of November 13, 1847, in Lexington, Ky.

3. Words uncertain.

4. Polk did not appoint George W. Hughes governor of Veracruz; on that appointment, see letter and notes in Robert B. Reynolds to Polk, December 21, 1847. Born in Elmira, N.Y., and educated at the U.S. Military Academy, Hughes (1806–70) was a New York and federal engineer before serving in the army's Corps of Topographical Engineers, 1838–51. Initially a captain, he earned brevets to major in 1847 and to lieutenant colonel in 1848. He also served in the Maryland and District of Columbia volunteers, 1847–48, initially as a lieutenant colonel and, beginning October 1, 1847, as a colonel. He was civil and military governor of the Department of Jalapa and Perote, December 1847–June 1848. He later represented a Maryland district as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1859–61.

FROM HENRY M. SHREVE¹

NEW YORK AND WASHINGTON TELEGRAPH²

The following was received at this office 6 o'clock, 53 minutes.

Dated St. Louis Dec 22d [1847]³

Henry Shreves respects to the President the first despatch by lightning over the Atlantic Lake and Mississippi telegraph⁴ between St. Louis and the Atlantic Sea board. The democracy⁵ of the west and true patriots will commend the spirit of the annual message.

HENRY M. SHREVES

Partly printed N, telegram. DLC—JKP. Postmarked by the Magnetic Telegraph Office at Washington City and addressed to Washington City.

From Polk's AE: "Recd. at 7 1/2 O.Clock P.M. Decr. 22nd 1847; This is the first Telegraphic despatch ever transmitted from St. Louis Mo. and Washington City."

1. Born in New Jersey and raised in Pennsylvania, Shreve (1783 or 1785–1851)—whose surname the telegraph operator misspelled—aided Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans and captained the first steamboat up the Mississippi River in 1814–15. In 1816 he built an improved steamboat, the *Washington*; he also invented the steam snag-boat. He served as U.S. superintendent of Western river improvements, 1826–41.

2. On the Magnetic Telegraph Company, also known as the New York and Washington Telegraph Company, see note in James Brooks to Polk, November 30, 1847.

3. Year identified from Polk's AE.

4. Henry O'Rielly, in 1845, obtained a contract from Amos Kendall, Samuel F. B. Morse's business agent, to construct a telegraph line from Philadelphia west to St. Louis through various intermediate locations. O'Rielly thus founded the Atlantic, Lake, and Mississippi Telegraph Company. It began operation between Philadelphia and Harrisburg, Penn., in January 1846 and reached Pittsburgh that December.

5. Democratic party.

FROM SIDNEY BREESE¹

Senate chambers Dec. 28. 1847

Mr. Breese begs to call the attention of the President, to the Case of Michael Kennedy² of Illinois whose appt. of Consul to Galway Ireland, has been revoked, and to ask the President, if, amid his multifarious and pressing duties, he has found occasion to speak to the secretary of state³ on the subject.

Mr. Breese would avail himself of this occasion to press upon the notice of the President, the appt. of Wm. B. Reynolds⁴ of Illinois as 2d Lieut. in the 5th Regt. of Infy. His recommendation is on the files of the War Dept.⁵ He served with honor in the 2d Regt. of Ill. Volunteers so highly distinguished at Buena Vista, has been at West Point, & is *well* qualified for the Place.

[SIDNEY BREESE]

AN. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally. From Polk's AE, erroneously: received "Decr. ___ 1848."

1. An Illinois Democrat and attorney, Sidney Breese (1800–1878) served as U.S. attorney for Illinois, 1827–29, and U.S. senator, 1843–49. Before and after his Senate term, he sat on the benches of various state courts in Illinois.

2. Kennedy had served as consul at Galway, Ireland, since 1844. Polk replaced him on December 20, 1847, with Thomas M. Persse; the Senate gave its consent on March 8, 1848.

3. James Buchanan.

4. William B. Reynolds (1824?-c. 1860?), of Madison County, Ill., attended the U.S. Military Academy, 1841-42, and was a second lieutenant in the Second Illinois Infantry Regiment, June 1846-June 1847. Polk appointed him a second lieutenant in the Sixteenth Infantry Regiment—not the Fifth, as Breese here recommends—on December 30, 1847, and he served until August 7, 1848.

5. No such letter by Breese, whether addressed to Polk, to Secretary of War William L. Marcy, or to Adj. Gen. Roger Jones, has been found.

FROM FRANKLIN CLARK¹

Sir

Wiscasset [Maine] Decr 30 1847

On my arrival at Portland on Friday last I found that the subject of a successor to the late Senator Fairfield² had been under consideration among the leaders of the democratic party, and without any particular knowledge of Gov. Danas³ views they had arrived at the conclusion that the Hon Jos Howard⁴ the brother in law of Gov Dana would certainly be appointed. I lost no time in addressing the Govr, but before the Mail left I heard of the arrival of Gov Dana in the city. I immediately waited upon him and communicated your Message, and urged the appoint of Mr Clifford.⁵ I stated to him that it would be regarded as a great favour by you and that in the event of Mr C's appoint't a gentleman would be taken from Maine to fill the office made vacant by the appt of Mr Clifford. I found he was reluctant to commit himself but desired to know if I understood who would be the successor of Mr Clifford. I replied in the negative. He then stated that after attending the funeral of our late lamented friend Gov Fairfield he should take the Mail stage for Augusta where he should have a further opportunity of seeing and consulting his friends. I found on my arr[iva]l⁶ at Portland that all the Machinery there, had been put in motion to operate upon him and that among others the Hon John Anderson⁷ our mutual friend had been appeal'd to for his influence in favr of Mr Howard. I lost no time in seeking an interview with him. When he stated to me that it was so, and that he regretted very much that you had not expressed at an earlier moment your feelings and wishes on the subject, I stated to him, as I beleived it to be my duty, that the vacancy occassioned by Mr Cs appointt would be filled by some one from our own state, which appeared to afford him some releif. He then interrogated me in reference to who the individual would be, of course. I had no authority for naming any one in particular. He then advised me to address you on the subject and if he and his friends who had been active in urging Mr Howards claims could have the assurance that Mr Howard would be selected to fill the place vacated in the event of Mr C's appointt to the senate he and they would at once withdraw all their influence in favour of Mr Howard as the successor of Gov Fairfield.

As it regards Mr Howards qualifications to fill the place now occupied by the Hon Mr Clifford there appears to be but little difference of opinion among intelligent men, and that is favourable. Mr Anderson did not fail to express his conviction that no one from this state, of the democratic party, could be selected who would carry into that important station more character as a lawyer and a gentleman, and in which I most heartily concur. I rode some 25 miles in company with Gov Dana on saturday night and did not fail to urge the importance of his appointing Mr Clifford to the Senate.

I would further add that I saw and conversed with several of the most prominent gentleman of the Democratic party in Portland all of whom concurred in the opinion that the appointt of Mr Clifford could not fail to exact a favourable influence and who cheerfully cooperated with me in my exactions to influence the Govr, among whom were none more zealous than N L Woodbury Esqr^s of Portland.

I shall wait your reply, flattering myself that you will not have occasion to regret the confidence you have reposed in me and remain Dear Sir

FRANKLIN CLARK

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked “Private.” From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received January 7, 1848; “*Private*.”

1. Clark (1801–74), a Wiscasset merchant, served in the Maine Senate, 1847, and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1847–49.

2. A Saco, Maine, Democrat, John Fairfield (1797–1847) worked as a merchant and lawyer before serving as reporter of decisions of the Maine Supreme Court, 1832–35; in the U.S. House, 1835–38; and as governor, 1839–40 and 1842–43. He served in the U.S. Senate from 1843 until his death following a knee surgery on December 24, 1847. His funeral was held on January 1, 1848, at the Saco Congregational Church.

3. John W. Dana (1808–67), a businessman and antislavery Democrat from Fryeburg, Maine, served in the Maine House, 1841–42; in the Maine Senate, 1843–44; briefly as acting governor, 1844; and as governor, 1847–50. He later became *chargé d’affaires* and then minister to Bolivia, 1853–59.

4. Born in Brownsfield, in Maine, lawyer Joseph Howard (1800–1877) was York County attorney for about a decade before he settled in Portland in 1837. He served as U.S. attorney for Maine, 1837–48, and as an associate justice of the Maine Supreme Court, 1848–55.

5. Democrat Nathan Clifford (1803–81), whom Polk evidently told Clark he wished to succeed Fairfield, was U.S. attorney general, 1846–48. The New Hampshire–born Maine lawyer had served in the Maine House, 1830–34; as Maine attorney general, 1834–38; and in the U.S. House, 1839–43. He went to Mexico, 1848–49, first to bring the amended Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and then as minister. He was an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, 1858–81.

6. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

7. Anderson (1792–1853), a Portland lawyer born in Windham, in Maine, served in the state senate, 1824; as a Jacksonian in the U.S. House, 1825–33; as Portland mayor, 1833 and 1842; as U.S. attorney for Maine, 1833–37; and as customs collector at Portland, 1837–41 and 1843–48.

8. Nathan L. Woodbury (1798–1880), a Democrat born in Sutton, Mass., served as postmaster at Minot, Maine, 1833–41; in the Maine House, 1835–36; and in the Maine Senate, 1837–38. After several years as Cumberland County sheriff, he became postmaster at Portland, 1845–49 and 1853–57. In 1835 he sold patent medicines; in 1846 he cofounded the Duck Pond Company to manufacture cotton, wool, iron, and steel.

FROM JOHN P. HELFENSTEIN¹

Dear Sir. Milwaukee [Wisc. Terr.]² 31st December 1847

Your message vetog. the River and Harbour bill³ has reached us this day. I am delighted with your objections, they are precisely what they should be, and what my knowledge and experience teaches me is one of principles that will save the Country from ruin.

Through me the first public notice was given in the "Union," by letter dated Milwaukee, of a combination of Whigs to make political capital out of your Veto.⁴ I was in New York at the time the Chicago Convention⁵ was concocted. I knew the meeting there assembled to be composed of the most bitter Whigs, consequently learnt the object to be political—president making was the leading object—in this however the prime movers of the Convention were fail'd. Before I mooved to raise my voice against the Chicago Convention, saw Genl. Cass on my return home, I gave him the information I was in possession of, and got his Views, they are best told in his admirable reply to an invitation to attend that Convention.⁶

I rejoice to find myself so ably sustain'd in your Message. At one time I stood nearly alone on the subject. Now I am surrounded by a Host, who think with You.

JOHN P HELFENSTEIN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked "*private*" on the cover and at the top of the letter. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received January 2, 1848.

1. Helfenstein (c. 1777–1860s?), a Pennsylvania native and a Democrat, relocated to Milwaukee in 1843. He rose to become an insurance company executive, a prominent citizen, and a key supporter of Wisconsin statehood.

2. Wisconsin Territory had been organized in 1836 and covered, at times, the entirety of today's states of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, as well as parts of North Dakota and South Dakota east of the Missouri River.

3. Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill of 1847.

4. Helfenstein presumably means the Washington *Union*, but no such letter by him has been found in that newspaper. The *Daily Union* reported on July 23, in an unsigned piece reprinted from the Lowell (Mass.) *Advertiser*—unlikely to have been authored by the Wisconsinite—Whigs' plan to make a political issue of Polk's pocket veto.

5. Steamboat agent William M. Hall organized the River and Harbor Convention to win support in the press and in Congress for navigation improvements in the West. Held in Chicago, July 5–7, 1847, the convention attracted delegates from nineteen states and, according to Horace Greeley, of the New York *Tribune*, twenty thousand attendees. Speakers included Greeley, Abraham Lincoln, and former New York Whig congressman Millard Fillmore. The convention adopted resolutions affirming that Congress had the authority to improve rivers and harbors and that it was in the nation's interest for Congress to do so.

6. Lewis Cass's brief letter to the convention, dated May 29 and published in the New York *Herald* of July 8 and other newspapers, expresses thanks for the invitation but notes, "Circumstances . . . will put it out of my power to be present." Some interpreted Cass's brevity as dissatisfaction. According to the Milwaukee *Sentinel and Gazette* of July 21, this "non-committal" letter called into question his presumed support for internal improvements and "was received by the Convention with a shout of derision."

FROM ANTHONY TEN EYCK

Office U.S. Commission
Honolulu, Sand. Islds. Decr. 31, 1847

Sir,

Permit me to introduce to your acquaintance, the bearer hereof, Mr. Peter A. Brinsmade,¹ an American resident of these islands, & former U.S. Consul, here, who is about proceeding to Washington, as bearer of despatches, from me, to the Secretary of State.²

Mr. B. is a highly respectable gentleman, of very superior abilities, Who has resided here, engaged in extensive commercial pursuits, for many years.

The principal object of his mission, had in view by me, is to urge upon the Govt. the *determination* of various matters of complaint, against this Govt, which have been, and are now to be, forwarded to the Secretary of State.³ Another object is, that Mr. B., who thoroughly understands the situation of public affairs here, & the character, conduct & policy of those, who control & manage this Govt, may be in Washn., to give information & explain to yourself & the Secty of State, the necessity, in my opinion, of some different, more energetic & decided policy, towards this govt, than has ever yet been pursued, by the United States.⁴

You will find Mr. B. fully competent to give you any information desired, respecting these islands, & American interests in connexion

with them, & the coast of California & Origen; also, as respects the relative influence of the Americans, the English & French, with the *defacto* govt. of this country, its causes &c. &c.

I have deemed it my duty, in view of the complaints which have been forwarded to the State department, by my predecessor,⁵ & which yet remain undecided, & of those now forwarded by Mr. B.; and in view of the conduct of the officials of this Govt. towards our citizens, & the laws which they have recently caused to be enacted⁶; & in view of the probable action of the English Govt. upon complaints of their subjects, residing here, & suggestions, sent to London, by the English Consul General,⁷ to send Mr. Brinsmade to Washington, that he may explain, & press upon the Govt. the necessity, of a speedy decision, (one way or the other) upon all matters connected with this Legation, & which remain undetermined.

This, I conceive, due to our citizens, whose complaints have been forwarded to Washn., & who are Waiting, in painful suspense, for the Action of our Govt, not knowing how to regulate their business; it is due to the reputation of my predecessor, Mr. Brown, who forwarded these complaints, & thro' whom, our Govt. was most grossly insulted, by the unauthorized inter dict placed upon his official action, by the recklessness & passion of the King's Ministers⁸; it is due to the late President of the U. States, whose decision, as embodied in a despatch from Mr. Calhoun, to my predecessor,⁹ has been entirely disregarded, if not treated with contempt, by the irresponsible & incompetent rulers, *de facto*, of this Govt.; it is due to me, that I may be able to advise my countrymen, understandingly, of the protection which they may, or may not, expect from their own Govt, & that I may regulate my conduct, in accordance with the policy deemed most proper to be pursued, towards this Govt, by our own; it is *due*, also, to the men who administer the affairs of this nominal King, that, if possible, they may be convinced, it will not do to presume too much upon their own insignificance & weakness, or *everlastingly* upon the forbearance of the Govt. of the U. States.

I presume to suggest, that some competent person be directed to make an examination & synopsis, of all matters submitted from here, to the State department, & report upon them to you, & the Secretary of State, & that a *decision* be made upon each & all, at as early a date as convenient, & that the necessary instructions be forwarded to me. I should be pleased to have you read some of my despatches on the files of the State department. You will gather from them my views & opinions respecting the situation of affairs at these islands, & what I deem proper & necessary to be done.

A. TEN EYCK

ALS, duplicate. DNA–RG 59. Probably addressed to Washington City; marked “(Duplicate *via* China)” and “A.” From William Hunter, Jr.’s AES: received July 3, 1848.

1. Brinsmade (1804–59), a minister from New England, moved to Hawaii and cofounded the firm later called Ladd and Co. in 1833. Remaining a partner in that firm, he served as U.S. agent for commerce and seamen at Honolulu, 1838–44, and—though away from the islands at the time—U.S. consul there, 1844–45.

2. The Honolulu *Friend* reported on February 1, 1848, that Brinsmade had left Hawaii on the schooner *S.S.* for the United States “via Central America.” Besides the ALS of this letter to Polk, he carried Ten Eyck’s dispatches nos. 25 (December 20, 1847), 26 (December 24), 27 (December 31), 28 (January 4, 1848), and 29 (January 7) to Secretary of State James Buchanan, with enclosures; copies of dispatches nos. 23 (November 23, 1847) and 24 (November 26); and a copy of Ten Eyck’s January 4, 1848, letter of instructions to Brinsmade. The ALS to Polk has not been found, but the dispatches, according to William Hunter, Jr.’s endorsements, were received at the State Department on May 27, 1848. Ten Eyck also sent, by way of China on the American bark *Toulon*, the duplicate of this letter to Polk; dispatch no. 29B to Buchanan (January 7, 1848); duplicates of dispatches nos. 25–28, with enclosures; and Ten Eyck to Benjamin Stark, Jr., January 7, 1848. At least one version of each of these documents can be found in DNA–RG 59.

3. Dispatch no. 25 and its enclosures present the history of Ladd and Co.’s dispute with the Hawaiian government. The firm having withdrawn from arbitration in the belief that it would not receive a fair judgment, Ten Eyck asks that the U.S. government decide the matter. Dispatch no. 26 and its enclosures discuss another complaint by Ladd and Co. against the Hawaiian government; note that American John Wiley’s 1844 trial for rape remains unresolved and that the U.S. government has stopped responding to George Brown’s and, subsequently, Ten Eyck’s inquiries about it; complains about Brinsmade’s failed 1846 libel suit against Honolulu *Polynesian* editor James Jackson Jarves; and mentions an appeal by Stephen Reynolds, a merchant and an assignee of Ladd and Co.’s property, to the U.S. government regarding his “demand upon” the Hawaiian government.

4. In dispatch no. 26, Ten Eyck urges that the U.S. government take action to protect U.S. citizens’ “rights & interests” from the Hawaiian government and to “save the islands from the rapacious grasp of the English.”

5. George Brown (?–1846?), of Massachusetts, was U.S. commissioner to the Kingdom of Hawaii, 1843–46. He left Honolulu on August 5, 1846, on the brig *William Neilson*, possibly on a mission to establish closer relations between the United States and China. The ship, however, never reached China and was not heard from again.

6. Ten Eyck, in his dispatches to Buchanan, reports on Hawaiian laws that he believed harmed U.S. citizens and aimed to prevent the U.S. government from acting on their behalf. In dispatches nos. 23 and 24, he discusses a law of April 27, 1846, organizing Hawaii’s executive departments, creating a Board of

Commissioners to judge land claims, and regulating foreigners' ownership of businesses and land; principles subsequently set out by the board and approved by the Legislative Council; a law of June 16, 1847, requiring foreign ships to present consular certificates before clearing customs (Ten Eyck noted that this provision, which he affixed to no. 26, had passed at Joel Turrill's request); and a law of August 17, 1847, restricting foreigners' ability to own and transfer land. He enclosed in dispatch no. 26 (enclosure not found) and discusses in no. 28 Hawaii's Judiciary Act, passed September 7, 1847. The specific provisions to which he objects include the law's increase of judges' power and reduction of juries' roles, its effective ban on foreign lawyers, its requirement that arguments be submitted to the Supreme Court in the Hawaiian language, its empowerment of the Board of Commissioners over land titles, and its broadening of the grounds for finding slander or libel.

7. William Miller (1795–1861) was British consul general for the Pacific islands, 1843–61. Though born in England, during a military career stretching from 1811 to 1839 he had fought not only for the United Kingdom but also for Chile and Peru in their wars for independence. He attained the titles of general and commander-in-chief in Peru's army. According to Ten Eyck's dispatch no. 25, Miller informed the British government that he, like Ten Eyck, believed the Hawaiian government wrong in its actions against Ladd and Co. Dispatch no. 26 notes the promptness of British responses to complaints received from Miller.

8. The volatile Brown was often at odds with Hawaii's king and ministers, in part because of his insistence and their refusal that the U.S. agent nominate juries to try U.S. citizens in Hawaii. In July 1845, ten months after asking Pres. John Tyler to recall Brown, King Kamehameha III issued an interdict against Brown's correspondence with the Hawaiian government.

9. Ten Eyck does not refer to a response to the interdict; by that time Buchanan had replaced John C. Calhoun as secretary of state. He means Calhoun's dispatch no. 4 to Brown, dated January 20, 1845, in reference to Wiley's trial for rape. It communicates Pres. John Tyler's belief that, even in the absence of a treaty, Americans in Hawaii should enjoy "the same privileges as the citizens or subjects of the most favored nation" and, in particular, they should be "tried by a jury of foreigners," just as treaties guaranteed for British and French subjects. See the dispatch in Senate Executive Document No. 77, 52nd Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 63–64.

CIRCA 1848

FROM GEORGE C. SIBLEY ET AL.¹

[St. Charles County, Mo. c. 1848]²

The undersigned petitioners, who are citizens of St Charles County in the state of Missouri, most respectfully ask leave to remind your Excellency that whilst the People of every nation in the world sojourning in these United States, have always enjoyed freely and unmolested, the exercise of the Religion they respectively profess (and we trust they ever will), yet some of those nations with whom our citizens have hitherto had friendly commercial intercourse, whose interest and convenience have induced them in many instances to reside abroad temporarily with their families, have and still do utterly deny & prohibit the [in]-estimable³ privilege, so freely and fully enjoyed by their own People [in] the United States. And we would particularly call the attention of your Excellency to the existing state of Religious intolerance towards the protestant citizens of these States in Mexico and the Papal dominions,⁴ which some of your petitioners have witnessed and [even] grievously experienced. Now that entirely new relations are about to be⁵ [. . .]

[GEORGE C. SIBLEY]

AN, fragment of draft. MoSHi-L.

1. Letter written by Sibley. Born in Massachusetts and raised in North Carolina, Sibley (1782–1863) moved to present-day Missouri, where he served as assistant U.S. factor at Fort Bellefontaine, 1805–8, then as factor at Fort Osage. He led an exploratory and diplomatic mission among Indians in and around today's Oklahoma, 1811, and a U.S. government survey of the Santa Fe Trail, 1825–26. He then moved to St. Charles, Mo., where he and his wife founded Lindenwood Female College. An opponent of slavery and a Presbyterian, he was president of the St. Charles County Bible Society.

2. Place identified through content analysis; approximate year identified through content analysis and from letter of October 1847 on reverse of manuscript.

3. Text here and below obscured by tape.

4. Since winning independence from Spain in 1821, Mexico had retained Catholicism as the state—and the only legal—religion. A treaty signed in 1831 guaranteed limited religious freedom to Americans living in Mexico; other treaties included similar guarantees to British subjects and to citizens of the cities of the Hanseatic League. Not until 1860, however, did Mexico's legislature establish full religious liberty. The Papal States restricted Jews to ghettos and forbade the open practice of Protestant religion by its subjects. Foreigners, though, were permitted to hold Anglican services in a facility outside Rome.

5. Sibley et al. likely refer to "relations" with both Mexico and the Papal States. Despite his recall the previous October, Nicholas P. Trist continued to negotiate with Mexican commissioners. Signed at Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo, north of Mexico City, by Trist, Luis Gonzaga Cuevas, José Bernardo Couto y Pérez, and Miguel Atristáin on February 2, 1848, the resulting treaty called for the U.S. withdrawal from Mexico and set the national boundary as the southern border of Texas (at the Rio Grande), New Mexico, and Alta California, the details to be determined by a commissioner and a surveyor from each country. Mexican residents of the lands acquired by the United States could choose U.S. or Mexican citizenship. The U.S. government agreed to pay Mexico fifteen million dollars, plus interest, over four years, and to take responsibility for claims by Americans against the Mexican government. The treaty addressed issues regarding Indians in the new U.S. lands and set rules of war in case of a future conflict. After approval by the U.S. Senate and the Mexican Congress, ratifications were exchanged on May 30 and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was formally proclaimed on July 4. (Cuevas [1799 or 1800–1867], a lawyer born in Lerma, Mexico, served his government in various political and diplomatic posts, including as minister of foreign affairs in 1837, 1845, and 1849. A conservative and an advocate of peace with the United States, in 1848 he both helped write the original treaty and met with the U.S. commissioners who delivered the version amended by the U.S. Senate.) Meanwhile, following Polk's recommendation in his Third Annual Message to Congress, the House Ways and Means Committee on January 29 reported a bill that opened diplomatic relations with the Papal States, creating the post of chargé d'affaires (but not eliminating the fifty-one-year-old consulate). Polk signed the bill into law on March 27 and selected Jacob L. Martin for the post two days later. "An Act further to supply deficiencies in the Appropriations for the Service of the Fiscal Year ending the thirtieth of June, eighteen hundred and forty-eight." *SL*, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 23. For other diplomatic posts created by that law, see letter and notes in William M. Smyth to Polk, March 23, 1848.

JANUARY 1848

TO JOHN ANDERSON

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Jany. 3d 1848

In the present critical condition of public affairs, when the country is engaged in a foreign war, and when the policy of my administration is opposed by a powerful party, I trust I may be excused in expressing to *you* the solicitude I feel, that the successor of the lamented *Fairfield*¹ in the Senate of the United States, should be a man of sound political principles, and one who shall be able and efficient, in the aid he may give me in conducting the administration. I do not know who of your public men may be aspirants for the place, but I am satisfied that no one could be selected who would be more reliable and who could render more efficient service, than *Mr Clifford* the present Atto. Genl. of the United States. I should part with him as a member of my Cabinet with regret and only because the sphere of his usefulness to the Democratic party, and to the country would be enlarged by transferring him to the Senate. He is perfectly familiar with all the great questions and especially with those connected with the war, and of my policy in reference to them, and if in the Senate could at once take a prominent stand in their support. This, no man who had not possessed the same advantages, whatever may be his talents or general learning, could do for several months to come. It would be highly gratifying to me therefore, and I am sure would promote the interests of the Democratic party and the country, if *Gov. Dana*² should think proper to select *Mr Clifford*. Though the place in my Cabinet which *Mr Clifford* at present occupies, and the duties of which he discharges ably, and to my entire satisfaction, is an important one, it is at this moment vastly less so, than a place in the Senate of the United States. All this I would have been glad to say to *Gov. Dana* himself, but I do not know where a letter would reach him. It is far from my wish to intrude a desire which might not be consistent with *Gov. Dana's* sense

of duty, or which could not on any other grounds, than considerations of the public good. Reflecting on the importance of the subject, I concluded that I could venture to express, my opinions and wishes, to *you*, an old personal and political friend, and to say, to you, if the appointment has not been made, before you receive this letter, that you are at liberty to communicate my views *confidentially* to *Gov. Dana*, but to no one else. If the appointment has been made, it will of course be unnecessary to say any thing on the subject. You will of course regard this letter as intended for yourself *alone*, unless you shall think proper yourself to submit *confidentially* to *Gov. Dana*.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Portland, Maine, and marked “(Private & confidential).”

1. John Fairfield.
2. John W. Dana.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear sir [Yalobusha County, Miss.]¹ January 4th 1848

I nough take the oppitunity of riting you afew lins concerning your plantation. Youre people are all well. We are not don gethering Coten we have packed 120 Bags won hundred shiped from Troy to neworleans shiped the 29 of December.²

I hav brought your blacksmith Harry³ home.

I got your blacksmiths Tools home to day. Harry wiell begin to work in a day or two. I have bin around in the naberhood. I think he will git as much work as he can dough. Mager Mony⁴ who is your agent in car-rolton ses he had brought sute for Harry hire won cort mist last year.⁵ The man that hireed him last year⁶ was not at home when I was down so he had no mony. I tuck youre leter⁷ down with me. I have not herd from Col Campbell⁸ in some tim. I have bin and got all the act counts and give them to Mr *Leigh*.⁹

I think I shal have a beter chance for a coten crop this yeare as I have 100 hundred acres that has not bin in coten imean fresh land. A bill of articles 1000 thousan yards Bagin 900 lbs pounds of rope 10 lbs of Twine 9 sacks of salt won dosin spad

I was thinking It would be cheaper for you to by your servents shoes in neworleans.

If so it would be well to put 10 par of extry in the hose¹⁰ No 12.

You have given me no instructions about Iron. The Most of the smith find Iron for ther costommers.

A bill of Iron	lbs
slab iron half inch thick 9 inches wide	400 pounds
bar iron 2 inches wide three quaters inch thick	500 pounds
1 bar of iron 4 inches wide three quaters inch thick	
4 bars of iron 2 inches wide half inch thick	
1 bar of blisterd steal	
2 bars 4 inches wide 1 inch thick	
1 han ham mer waing ¹¹ 4 or 5 pounds	
6 shovels [smols] ¹² —10 lbs pounds of hors Shoe Nals leter G on the head of them	

I notis youre frate bill at troy the chargeed as much for a bolt of bagin contaning 50 yards as the would for won con taning 100 yards. TW Beal¹³ said the ought to makes special contrack mad on the packadge.

JOHN A MAIRS

[P.S.] I would like to now whether you git this leter dy rectly or not.
John A Mairs

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received January 25, 1848; answered February 1, 1848; “Relates to my business on my plantation in Mississippi.”

1. Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

2. Mairs enclosed a list of the weights of cotton bags numbered 106 to 120. The weights total 7,540 pounds, though Mairs erroneously gives the total as 7,520. AD. DLC–JKP.

3. Long Harry.

4. James Money (c. 1780–1860s?), likely born in Virginia, purchased land in Carroll County, Miss., in 1837 and moved there the next year. He served as Carroll County treasurer, 1841–54. He owned a building in Carrollton that burned in 1843 and he was a Carroll County landlord in 1850. (Volume 12 of this series erroneously indexes Money as Major Maney.)

5. Carroll County, Miss., court records include no mention of a suit filed by Money or Polk in 1847 or 1848. According to Mairs to Polk, February 8, 1849, however, Polk by then had won the suit for Harry’s pay but not yet received the money. ALS. DLC–JKP.

6. On the men who rented Long Harry, see letter and notes in Polk to Robert Campbell, Jr., November 24, 1847.

7. Polk to Mairs, November 24, 1847.

8. Robert Campbell, Jr.

9. John T. Leigh.

10. Mairs probably meant to write “house.”

11. Mairs probably meant to write “hand hammer weighing.”

12. Mairs may have meant to write "small" or "smalls," but this word is uncertain and possibly "mols."

13. Thomas W. Beale.

FROM JOHN M. BASS

Dr Sir

Nashville Jan'y 6 1848

I enclose you herein check No 5622 I having Cashed on Phila Bank¹ for \$565.00 of which \$500 is for rent of house the past year & 65 for advances made by you to my son William² this being the amt reported by him as due & if there is any mistake please inform me in reply to this.³ For the kindness of Mrs Polk & yourself to him Mrs B⁴ & myself feel under deep obligations which we hope it may be in our power some-day to repay. He returned home in good health after a long & tedious journey. In order to have the house taken care of we have permitted the north wing to be occupied by a careful old white man & his wife without rent untill you order to the contrary. The wing extending towards the garden known as the nursery is occupied by a careful negro woman of our own who is confined pretty much to her room by indisposition & therefore rarely leaves the lot. A portion of our furniture is locked up in some of the other rooms, the whole house will be surrendered to you at a moments warning. The studded or wooden partitions were moved from their places & the plastering torn off by the explosion of the powder magazine—much of the plastering of the ceilings is also down, besides the breaking of sash & glass, but I have not discovered that the Brick walls are injured—one or two of the key stones of the arches over the windows were jarred out & fell by the concussion to the ground—some of the doors were torn from their hinges.

I am strongly inclined to the opinion that it would be better & cost you but little more to rebuild all but the northern wing. I would let that stand. I have suggested a plan to Mr Hughes⁵ of which he has promised to make a draft & submit to you as he passes through Washington on his way to Phila & N York the latter part of this month.⁶

In regard to the difficulty between Judge Catron & Mr McGavock⁷ & myself of which no doubt the Judge has informed you. The Judge insisted that the *legal title* to the avenue should be conveyed to you. This we objected to because it formed no part of the contract with Govr Brown⁸ except that you were to have the most free & uninterrupted use of the avenue & this we proposed should be incorporated in Mr Littons⁹ deed—but this did not satisfy the Judge—he seemed to think that it was necessary someone should hold the legal title to prevent trespasses nuisances &c on the avenue. I then proposed that you should be constituted a trustee to hold the legal title for the benefit of all parties

entitled to its use for the purpose of preventing trespasses nuisances &c. I thought we had agreed upon this but he went off & drew up a deed in which he described the avenue as an “appurtenant” to your house & grounds without naming the other property binding on the avenue to which it is equally “appurtenant” if to any & to this we objected & as the Judge had to leave the next morning nothing further has been done. The real ground taken by us is that the *legal title* to the avenue is in the heirs of Judge Grundy,¹⁰ where we wish it to remain, not having bargained for its alienation to any one, but that the parties owning property fronting on it have a perfect right to its uninterrupted use & enjoyment as an avenue street or high way forever.

The only difference it can make to any one is this, that by the deed as Judge C wishes it made if the avenue should ever be closed it would have to be by the consent of every one of the parties entitled to its use, then the fee simple in the avenue would revert to you where as you paid nothing for it you are therefore no more entitled than the rest of us. By the deed as we desire to have it made the fee simple would fall to Mr Grundys heirs in the contingency named—a contingency I admit as improbable now, as I can well concieve any thing to be—so improbable indeed that it would I think scarcely have been insisted on but for a wish on the part of the Judge (as I think) to make the most of & magnify the service he had undertaken to perform for you in procuring the title &c to this property. The deed made by me individually I believe is now satisfactory to him though we had some difficulty about that he wanted me to convey to you the half of Union alley on the north of the premises—a thing I had no right to do—to satisfy him however I made a release of all my right & title to it to you—with any reasonable man that you may designate to review & examine the deed to be made by Litton I hope & believe there cannot be the slightest difficulty in having a satisfactory deed to all parties executed.

With best regards to Mrs Polk I have the honor to be

JNO M BASS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received January 15, 1848; answered January 17, 1848; “Relates to my private business.”

1. The Philadelphia Bank opened in 1803 and received a charter from the Pennsylvania legislature in 1804.

2. William J. Bass (1830–1862?), expelled from Mount St. Mary’s College, Emmitsburg, Md., only weeks after matriculating, stayed at the Executive Mansion beginning November 28, 1847. Polk gave him letters of support from government officials and twenty dollars to aid his attempt—unsuccessful—to regain admittance to the college. The president then, on December 8, gave him forty-five dollars for his trip home to Nashville.

3. Enclosure not found.
4. Malvina Chenault Grundy (1809–63), Felix Grundy's daughter, married John M. Bass in 1829.
5. James M. Hughes.
6. Draft not found.
7. John Catron and Jacob McGavock. McGavock (1790–1878), like John M. Bass, was a son-in-law of Felix Grundy and an executor of his estate. Born in Virginia, McGavock moved to Nashville in 1807 and served as an aide to Andrew Jackson in the Creek War of 1813–14. A major slaveholder, he served as clerk of the Davidson County circuit court, 1834–36, and of the U.S. district court for Middle Tennessee from the 1840s to the Civil War.
8. Aaron V. Brown.
9. Bass may refer to Benjamin or, less likely, Isaac Litton. Benjamin (1799–1866), an Irish-born Nashville lawyer and farmer, was clerk of the chancery court at Franklin, Tenn., in the 1830s and 1840s. His brother Isaac (1812–94), born in Dublin, served as postmaster at Doneraile, Tenn., 1835–36, and commissioner for the chancery court at Franklin, 1845. In February 1848 he and a partner established Litton & Thomas, a Nashville mercantile business; in 1850 he was an Edgefield, Tenn., clerk. A temperance reformer since at least 1845, he had become secretary and commissioner for the Nashville branch of the Sons of Temperance by the end of 1848.
10. Felix Grundy (1777–1840), the mentor to Polk whose home Polk purchased, had played an active role in gaining statehood for his native Kentucky and afterward served in its state legislature and, 1806–7, on its supreme court. In 1807 he moved to Nashville, where he soon became one of Tennessee's most prominent lawyers and politicians. He served in the U.S. House, 1811–14; in the U.S. Senate, 1829–38 and 1839–40; and as U.S. attorney general, 1838–39. Thus, by 1819, when Polk began reading law in Grundy's office, the latter already had become an established figure in Tennessee; the two quickly settled into a close and lifelong relationship.

FROM JOHN ANDERSON

My Dear Sir, Portland [Maine]¹ Jan'y 7 1848

Last evening I received your Letter of the 3d inst and deeply regret that it is not in my power to render you the service you request. The appointment was made on the 5th inst, contrary to the expectation of us all, of Mr Moore,² the Atty Genl of this State. I am truly sorry that I was not, at once, advised of your wishes.

There was a rumor here that a Letter had been received from a member of the Cabinet expressing a desire for Mr Cliffords appointment; but it was not credited, and our friends became committed for Mr Howard.³ Some days after this committal a Letter from Mr Buchanan to the Postmaster of this city⁴ was shown, which, as well as the dec-

larations of Mr Clark who had then arrived with the remains of Mr Fairfield,⁵ confirmed the rumor. Altho' the whole matter, at that late hour, had got a bad direction, I called, at once, on the Governor,⁶ who that day came into the city, & on Mr Howard; and with the opinion given by Mr Clark of the probable disposition of the Atty Genls office in the event of Mr Cliffords appointment, was almost sure of success. Indeed, after accompanying the Gov & Mr Howard to Mr Fairfields funeral, I felt so confident of success that I told Mr Clark, on parting with him, that he would probably carry to you the first news of Mr Cliffords appointment; and had the Governor remained in this city, I still believe that appointment would have been made. The same evening of Mr Fairfields funeral the Gov went to Augusta, and we, yesterday, without the least intimation of any change of opinion, were notably astonished by the report of Mr Moores appointment.

As the mischief is done, I shall, of course, keep your Letter to myself. No one, but my wife,⁷ who is my only & most faithful confidential councillor, knows or shall ever know of my receipt of that Letter.

Had I received your Letter or even known your anxiety for Mr Cliffords appointment, before the little, contemptable under currents got in motion, I feel confident the appointment wuld have been secured, and I need not assure you, I hope, that it would have given me more sincere pleasure to have rendered you this service, that⁸ fifty such appointments could confer on the recipients. Although you will not have the aid of Mr Clifford *immediately* in the Senate I can not doubt the perfect justification of your Administration in any trial to which our opponents may subject it.

Truth, Justice, honest intentions & faithful exertions are on your side, & the people now, & history hereafter, will do you justice.

JOHN ANDERSON

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. State identified through content analysis.

2. Maine native Wyman B. S. Moor (1811–69) taught school in New Brunswick, Canada, before becoming a lawyer in Waterville and then Bangor, Maine. A Democrat, he served in the state house, 1839, and as state attorney general, 1844–48. Appointed to the U.S. Senate upon John Fairfield's death, he served as a Democrat from January 5 to June 7, 1848, then resumed his law practice. Moor later became consul general to the British North American Provinces (Canada), 1857–61.

3. Joseph Howard.

4. Nathan L. Woodbury.

5. Franklin Clark and John Fairfield.

6. John W. Dana.

7. Ann Williams Jameson Anderson (1804–79) was John Anderson's second wife. A Maine native, she lived in Freeport before moving to Portland, upon their marriage, in 1822.

8. Anderson probably meant to write "than."

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Dr Sir: [Washington City]¹ Jany. 7th 1848

Will you send to me, if you are not using them, the charges preferred by Genl. S. against *Genls. Pillow, Worth & Col. Duncan*²; and also the charges preferred by *Genl. Worth* against *Genl. Scott*. I wish to see you at such time in the course of the day as you may be most at leisure. If you have received any further despatches from the army, bring them with you.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MH–H. Addressed locally.

1. Place identified through content analysis.
2. Winfield Scott, Gideon J. Pillow, William J. Worth, and James Duncan.

FROM FRANKLIN CLARK

Sir Wiscasset [Maine] Jany 9th 1848

I avail myself of the earliest moment after its receipt to lay before you a letter addressed to me by Govr Dana¹ with the remark, that I can add nothing to strengthen the reasons offered by the Govr and which go very far to satisfy me that he has been actuated by no other motive than the success & harmony of the democratic party in this state. Whether this object will be accomplished by the course he has adopted, time alone will determine. Next to the Hon Mr Clifford I do not know of a better appointment that could be made under the existing state of things, or one that in the end would prove more acceptable to yourself.

FRANKLIN CLARK

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received January 13, 1848.

1. In the enclosed letter of January 5, 1848, John W. Dana informs Clark that he is aware that Polk favors Nathan Clifford for the appointment of U.S. senator from Maine. Dana, however, does not wish to appoint someone who will run for a full Senate term in the fall, as he believes Clifford will. Doing so would imply support for that candidate, which in turn would "excite a state of feeling that" would lose Maine for the Democratic party in the fall's state and presidential elections. Dana affirms that Wyman B. S. Moor, the appointee, supports all Polk's policies, including those regarding the Mexican War and

the acquisition of territory from Mexico, and “will resist aggression from the North upon the South or the South upon the North.” Dana explains that he will not write to Polk because Polk “did not communicate with me, except verbally, through you”; he asks Clark to forward his letter and/or relate its contents to the president. ALS. DLC–JKP.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

My Dear Sir: [Washington City]¹ Monday Jany. 10th 1848

As soon as you have the despatches prepared, which were agreed upon, on yesterday, I request that you will bring them over, that we may review them together.² Deeming the subject to which they relate of more importance than any other, at this moment, requiring attention, I request that you will have the despatches prepared, at the earliest period, your other engagements will permit.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. InHi. Addressed locally.

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. According to his diary, Polk decided, in cabinet meetings of January 3 and 4, 1848, to replace Winfield Scott with William O. Butler as commanding general. In the January 3 meeting, he decided to hold a court of inquiry—not a court-martial—into the charges preferred between Scott and William J. Worth. In the cabinet meeting of January 8, he reiterated his decision about Butler and proposed a court of inquiry into the charges against Gideon J. Pillow and James Duncan, as well. After discussing that decision with several cabinet members that evening, on January 9 he directed Marcy to write dispatches and orders for the court of inquiry, Pillow’s and Duncan’s release from arrest, and, apparently, Scott’s recall. Marcy and Polk discussed the dispatches, particularly the members of the court, in a cabinet meeting on January 11 and privately on the twelfth. On the dispatches and orders, see letter and notes in Marcy to Polk, January 10, 1848.

FROM WILLIAM L. MARCY

[Washington City] Jany. 10. [1848]¹ half past 7. o’c.

I have just rcd your note² and herewith send two dispatches prepared for Genl Scott. One relieving him from command, and the other in relation to the charges agt Pillow Worth & Duncan.³

I am now busy in sketching a dispatch to Butler as an Order for the Court of Enquiry.⁴

W. L. MARCY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Place and year identified through content analysis.
2. Polk to Marcy, January 10, 1848.
3. Enclosures not found. See Marcy's final dispatches of January 13, 1848, to Winfield Scott in House Executive Document No. 56, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 230–33, 234–35. In one dispatch, Marcy reports Polk's declining now to prosecute William J. Worth. According to the dispatch, Worth, offended by General Orders, No. 349, and failing to obtain "redress" from Scott, correctly sought it from Polk; doing so was not "a military offense," as Scott claimed. Marcy strongly affirms an officer's right to "seek redress" against a superior "by appeal." He enclosed an order for Worth's release from arrest. Marcy also reports that, due to the impracticality of a court-martial during the war, Polk instead has ordered a court of inquiry—that order enclosed—into Scott's charges against Gideon J. Pillow and James Duncan and Worth's against Scott; Polk will order Pillow's and Duncan's release. Marcy reports not having received the proceedings of the court of inquiry into Pillow and the howitzers, or Pillow's appeal. The other dispatch, relieving Scott as commanding general in favor of William O. Butler, cites Scott's June 4, 1847, request for recall and orders him to attend the upcoming court of inquiry.
4. General Orders, No. 2, issued on January 13, appointed Gen. Nathan Towson, Gen. Caleb Cushing, and Col. Edward G. W. Butler (replaced on January 17, by General Orders, No. 3, with Col. William G. Belknap) to the court and appointed Lt. Richard P. Hammond (replaced, by General Orders, No. 3, with Capt. Samuel C. Ridgely) judge advocate and recorder. It directed the court to begin, at Perote Castle in Mexico (it was moved, by General Orders, No. 3, to Puebla), on or soon after February 18. House Executive Document No. 56, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 233–34 (General Orders, No. 3, on pp. 235–36). For the actual dates and locations of the court, see note in Robert B. Reynolds to Polk, February 7, 1848.

FROM AARON H. PALMER¹

Sir:

New York, *January 10, 1848*

I have the honor of transmitting you, herewith, a brief memoir on the present state, productive resources, and capabilities for commerce, of several of the comparatively unknown countries of the East, which are daily becoming of importance to us in a political as well as commercial point of view, and where a new world may be opened to the trading enterprise of our countrymen.²

The territories of Oregon and California,³ now in rapid progress of settlement by enterprising citizens of the United States, together with the great and increasing value of American navigation employed in commerce and the whale fishery in the northern Pacific, are eminently entitled to the fostering care of our government, and require the early adoption of a comprehensive system of policy, both for their protection and development, and to secure the permanency of our commercial and

maritime supremacy on that ocean. Early measures should be taken for the reconnoissance and survey of the most feasible route for a ship canal to unite the Atlantic and Pacific, and also for a railroad from a point on the Mississippi to San Francisco or San Diego, in California, to accelerate intercommunication between the different sections of our magnificent and mighty republic on both oceans.

It is estimated that the American whaling vessels alone in the Pacific exceed in number 600,⁴ and give employment to upwards of 20,000 men; and that during the year ending the 31st December, 1847, the whole number of our merchant vessels which cleared for ports in the Pacific and to ports in the East Indies, amounted to 181.

I would also take leave to suggest the importance of an early revision of our commercial convention with Russia of the [5/17]th April, 1824,⁵ for the admission of our flag into the ports of Siberia, Kamtschatka, the Kurile and Aleutian islands, in the northern Pacific ocean, as well as those of the Russian colonies on the northwestern coast of America⁶; by which a new and profitable commerce may be opened, mutually beneficial to both nations.

I consider it equally important that our government should insist on the right of navigating the great Manchurian river Amur and its affluents, and of trading with the colonial dependencies of China, upon the same footing as the Russians⁷; and that we claim the further privilege of commercial intercourse at Tinghae, in the Chusan Archipelago.⁸ The favorable position of that port, with its safe anchorages, accessible to the largest ships at all seasons, lying near the embouchure of the great Yangtsekang river,⁹ and within two days sail of Japan and Corea, give it superior advantages over every other port in China for trade, and as a depot and halting station for the American trans-Pacific line of steamers, which it is contemplated to establish between Panama and China, in connexion with the line now in progress from Panama to Oregon.¹⁰

The memoir is extracted from my forthcoming work, entitled "The Unknown Countries of the East,"¹¹ and is arranged under the following heads, viz:

1. *Siberia, its valuable products and rich gold mines.*
2. *Russian overland trade with China at Kiakta,¹² &c.*
3. *Manchuria and the river Amur, &c.*
4. *Island of Tarakay, or Saghalien.¹³*
5. *Russian and Japanese Kurile islands, &c.*
6. *Steam communication with China: superior commercial advantages of Chusan, &c.*

7. *Special mission to the East: steam navigation on the Indus and Brahmaputra, &c. Extensive caravan trade with Northwestern and Central Asia, &c.*

8. *Policy of encouraging immigration of Chinese agricultural laborers to California: railroad from the Mississippi to the bay of San Francisco.*

9. *Ship canal from the Atlantic to the Pacific; to which are appended an outline chart of the coast of Northern Asia and the adjacent islands in the Northern Pacific and a map of the isthmus of Nicaragua¹⁴; together with a prospectus of the new work above mentioned, for which your patronage and the aid of Congress is most respectfully solicited, to enable me to complete it under the auspices of our government according to the plan therein indicated.*

AARON H. PALMER

PL. Published in Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 80, 30th Congress, 1st Session, 1st ed., pp. 1–2. Addressed to Washington City. Also published in *Washington Daily Union*, May 13, 1848; in *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, May 15, 1848; in Manchester (N.H.) *Weekly Union*, May 20, 1848; and, with revisions, in Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 80, 30th Congress, 1st Session, rev. ed., pp. 1–3. Russian translation published as *Zapiska o Sibiri, Man'-chzhurii i ob ostrovakh sievernoi chasti Tikhago Okeana* (St. Petersburg: Tip. M. Stasiulevicha, 1906), pp. 1–3.

1. Palmer (c. 1778 or c. 1785–1863), a New York City lawyer, was admitted to the U.S. Supreme Court bar in 1824 and established a stock-and-loan business in 1825. By 1831 he was operating an agency through which he pursued clients' claims against the U.S. and foreign governments. He later went to work for the London firm N. M. Rothschild & Sons and began trading with China. By 1848 he was a corresponding member of the National Institute for the Promotion of Science. Throughout the 1840s and 1850s, Palmer collected information and wrote to government officials urging expanded commerce in Asia and Africa; he was a major promoter of the mission to Japan that, in 1852–54, was undertaken by Cdre. Matthew C. Perry. Moving to Washington City, he became Ecuador's consul general for the United States in 1852 and Peru's vice consul for Washington City, Georgetown, D.C., and Alexandria, Va., by 1854. According to a letter he wrote to James Buchanan on November 28, 1846, Palmer wrote to Polk on January 31, 1846, about nonwestern nations with which the United States had no treaties (letter to Polk not found). House Document No. 96, 29th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 32.

2. Polk submitted this letter and the enclosed memoir, through Ambrose H. Sevier, to the Senate. On March 8, 1848, the Senate referred them to the Committee on the Library and ordered them printed. Later obtaining from

Palmer revised versions of the letter and memoir, the Senate ordered those printed on June 3. Both editions appeared under the title *Memoir, Geographical, Political, and Commercial, on the Present state, productive resources, and capabilities for commerce, of Siberia, Manchuria, and the Asiatic islands of the Northern Pacific ocean; and on the importance of opening commercial intercourse with those countries, &c.* Senate Miscellaneous Document No. 80, 30th Congress, 1st Session, 1st and rev. eds.

3. Palmer refers to these regions, not to formally organized U.S. territories. Polk did not sign a bill creating a territorial government for Oregon until August 14, 1848. California, formally acquired by the United States after Palmer wrote this letter through the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, became a state in 1850 without having gone through the territorial stage.

4. In the revised edition, Palmer, having reviewed “official data,” asserts that over seven hundred such vessels, weighing “about 240,000 tons,” represented over forty million dollars in capital, with “the annual product of the fishery being estimated at \$10,000,000.”

5. Bracketed text illegible in first edition of Senate document due to typographical error and transcribed from revised edition. This convention, signed in St. Petersburg on April 17 (April 5 by the Julian calendar then used in Russia), 1824, and ratified the next January, permitted Russians and Americans to sail and fish in the Pacific Ocean and, for ten years, in interior coastal waterways on both sides. They could land, in areas not “occupied,” to trade with “natives” (alcohol and weapons excluded). The treaty forbade either country’s people to land near a settlement of the other without permission and set the boundary between Russian and U.S. settlement in North America at 54° 40’.

6. Russians began exploring Alaska in the early eighteenth century and established their first permanent settlement, on Kodiak Island, in 1784. From 1799 to 1862 the Russian-American Company controlled all Russian colonies in North America. Its chief concern was obtaining furs, largely through the use of native labor, though Russians in Alaska also conducted scientific expeditions and missionary work among the native peoples. After 1807 Novo-Arkhangelsk, or Sitka, was the capital of Russian America. The company maintained one colony in California, Fort Ross, 1812–41. According to statistics published by P. Tikhmenief in 1863, Russian America’s population in 1848 was 8,707, though natives probably accounted for well over two-thirds of those. In 1840 the company began leasing its Alaskan territory south of 58° 40’ to the United Kingdom; in 1867 Russia sold Alaska to the United States.

7. Palmer apparently refers to areas within China’s Qing Empire not inhabited primarily by speakers of Chinese: Manchuria, through which flows the Amur River, and possibly Mongolia, Tibet, Xinjiang, or Qinghai. At the time American traders, under the Treaty of Wanghia (which, signed in 1844 and proclaimed in 1846, had opened China to U.S. trade), were welcome only at five Chinese seaports (besides British-controlled Hong Kong and Portuguese-controlled Macau). Russia long had carried on restricted commerce with China, especially since a 1727 treaty had established trade at Tsurukhaitu,

on the border with Manchuria, and—primarily—Kyakhta, on the border with Mongolia (mentioned in the table of contents below). Palmer, however, may have overestimated Russia's trading privileges. Despite Russia's interest in expanding trade in and navigation through the Qing Empire, in part to supply and sell furs from its American colonies, the Qing had granted no major concessions. Russians explored the Amur in 1846 and more extensively beginning in 1848 but, at the time Palmer wrote this letter, did not have the right of transit on that river and generally believed it unnavigable.

8. Dinghai and Zhoushan Archipelago.

9. Yangtze River.

10. On the steam service between South Carolina and Oregon, via Panama and California, established in 1847–48, see letter and notes in Joel Turrill to Polk, August 29, 1847. No steamships crossed the Pacific to China, however, until 1855, and even then they did so by sail; none did so under steam power until 1862. Not until after the Civil War did steamship lines provide regular service from America's western shore to China. The bill to create a line of war steamers from California to Hawaii and China that the House Naval Affairs Committee reported on May 4, 1848, but on which Congress never voted, did not include Dinghai as a destination.

11. Palmer never published this book, though the prospectus at the end of the memoir includes a letter of August 11, 1847, from Robert J. Walker to Palmer, attesting that the book would "enlarge our commerce," ordering five copies, and promising to procure copies for the Treasury Department's bureaus and major customs houses.

12. Kyakhta.

13. Sakhalin, Russia.

14. Following centuries of interest in a canal at such locales as the Isthmuses of Panama and Tehuantepec, Thomas Jefferson in 1788 suggested building one in Nicaragua. Palmer, in 1826, founded the Central American and United States Atlantic and Pacific Canal Company and contracted with the Federation of Central America to do just that. The U.S. government, however, did not support the effort, and Palmer failed to raise sufficient funds. Despite continued U.S. and Nicaraguan interest through the nineteenth century and beyond, that canal route was never developed.

FROM ASA B. MERRILL¹

Mr President

New Haven Ct. Jan 11th 1848

At this time when faction and treason are assailing you from high places and low, I think it is the duty of the people who placed you in the position you occupy, to speak out their sentiments. I am one of the labouring Men of this Republic who earn their living by the sweat of their brow. I never held Office of any kind nor do I ask any. I am an Independent Democrat who wishes to sustain the honor and rights of the Nation and let me assure you Sir, that the patriotic stand you have taken in regard,

to the Mexican war and all the measures of your administratio[n]² meet and receive the hearty approveal of a large Majority of the people of this Country and Sir you may rely on it the working and fighting men of this great Republic will sustain you and your patriotic Cabinet. It is mutch to be regreted by every true lover of his country, that their should be found in the house of Representatives a Majority who are so Eager to disgrace themselves and their country in the eys of the world, and I should think the Brave Old Gen Taylor would feel himself highly honered by the vote of thanks which his whig Bretheren passed him in the house of Representatives,³ and again to see John C. Calhoun standing shoulder to shoulder with that Blackgard of a Senator John P Hale of New Hampshire.⁴ I close Mr President with my best wishes for your welfare and that of your able Cabinet.

ASA B MERRILL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Merrill (1803–97), a New England native, lived in Springfield and Northampton, Mass., in the 1820s. He had become a New Haven, Conn., carriage maker by 1840; he remained in that profession until the 1880s and in that city until his death.

2. Letter cut off side of page.

3. Merrill probably refers erroneously to a joint resolution that the majority-Whig U.S. House considered on January 3, 1848, but that never came up for a vote. It thanked Zachary Taylor and the other officers and soldiers at the Battle of Buena Vista (February 22–23, 1847) “for their indomitable valor, skill, and good conduct” and directed Polk to inform Taylor of the resolution and send him a gold medal. A proposed amendment described the war as “unnecessarily and unconstitutionally begun by the President of the United States.” (On February 7 the House passed a nearly identical resolution without the amendment. The Senate passed it on February 16 and Polk signed it on May 9. “Joint Resolution of Thanks to Major-General Taylor.” *SL*, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Number 7.) Merrill may, however, refer to two joint resolutions that both houses of Congress had passed earlier, when the Democrats held majorities. One, which Polk signed on July 16, 1846, thanked Taylor and the other officers and soldiers for their “fortitude, skill, enterprise, and courage” in “the recent brilliant operations on the Rio Grande.” “A joint Resolution presenting the Thanks of Congress to Major-General Taylor, his Officers and Men.” *SL*, 29th Congress, 1st Session, Number 11. The other, signed March 2, 1847, thanked Taylor and his subordinates at Monterrey for the same commendable qualities; see letter and notes in Collin S. Tarpley to Polk, November 8, 1847. Each of these directed Polk to inform Taylor of the resolution and send him a gold medal; the second also requested swords for the other generals.

4. Hale (1806–73), a Dover, N.H., lawyer, served in the New Hampshire House, 1832 and, as Speaker, 1846; as U.S. attorney for New Hampshire, 1834–41; and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1843–45. An opponent of slavery, he voted

against Texas annexation. He represented New Hampshire in the Senate as a Free Soiler, 1847–53; without a party, 1855–57; and as a Republican, 1857–65. The Liberty party nominated him for president in 1847 but he gave his support to Free Soil party candidate Martin Van Buren in 1848; four years later Hale ran under the latter party. He served as minister to Spain, 1865–69. Although not political allies, he and John C. Calhoun both opposed the Mexican War. Merrill probably refers to their comments in the Senate on a bill authorizing Polk to raise two hundred thousand new troops for three years. Both, on December 30, 1847, accused Polk of intending to conquer all of Mexico and argued that the bill (which the president, without specific numbers, had requested in his Third Annual Message to Congress) would enable him to do so. They promoted a resolution, which Calhoun had introduced on December 15 and which he further defended on January 4, 1848, rejecting Mexico's conquest. The resolution never came to a vote. The bill—which, like the similar law passed in February 1847, was known as the Ten Regiment Bill—was passed by the Senate on March 17 but, the treaty ending the war having been signed the previous month, was never taken up by the House.

FROM MARIANO D. PAPPY¹

Sir:

Tallahassee [Fla.] Jany 11th 1848

I have the honor of enclosing herewith a copy of sundry resolutions adopted at a meeting of the Democratic party composed of gentlemen from different sections of this state held in this City on the 4th inst.² The object of the meeting was to respond to the message of your Excellency to the present Congress of the U. States. Whilst I assure you that the resolutions enclosed embody the sentiments and views of the Democratic party of this state, I am happy to know that the course of your Excellency guided as it has been by the purest patriotism, meets the approbation of not only the great democratic party of the Union, but also of every true and enlightened patriot.

M. D. PAPPY

ALS. DLC–JKP. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received February 10, 1848.

1. Pappy (1824–75), of Tallahassee, served as an assistant clerk for the Florida territorial house before being admitted to the bar in 1844. Upon Florida's achieving statehood, he became chief clerk of its house, 1845–46, and clerk of its supreme court, 1845–49.

2. The enclosed unanimous resolutions commend Polk's policies, especially his actions in Mexico. They blame Mexico for starting the war; endorse Polk's plan "to prosecute the war vigorously until an honorable peace, indemnity for the past and security for the future are obtained"; and praise the commanding officers, particularly Zachary Taylor and Winfield Scott. Describing "Wilmot Provisoes' or 'no more territory' provisions" as intended to obstruct the war effort, the resolutions label the proviso unconstitutional and encour-

age Southerners, “in forming a political association with the North,” to support the Democratic party, whose leaders and many of whose members, unlike their Whig counterparts, oppose the proviso. The resolutions offer Florida’s “thanks” to George M. Dallas and James Buchanan, men who “have taken grounds in behalf of the South and against the Wilmot Proviso.” They express support for the Walker Tariff and Independent Treasury system and opposition to a national bank. D. DLC–JKP.

TO EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Dear Sir:

Washington City Jany. 13th 1848

From the enclosed letters, two of them addressed to *Mr Stanton*, which he handed to me,¹ you will perceive that *Mr S. Jackson*² of Fayette County, wishes to rent the claimed land, and to obtain a lease for an additional quantity, or on a tract of 500 acres, lying six miles North of Somerville, owned by my ward *Marshall T. Polk jr.* The present lease on the land will expire, after which the open land, will be for rent. If you think it proper to rent it to *Mr Jackson*, and to give another lease for an additional quantity, you can do so. *Marshall* will be of age in May 1852, and the land can be rented or leased until the end of that year. I wish you to write to *Mr Jackson* that you are my agent & that you have authority to make the arrangements with him, if you shall think it proper to do so. On receiving your letter he will probably come to see you, on the subject.

When you shall have collected the rents due to *M. T. Polk’s* Heirs,³ and the instalment for the land sold in Madison, which is due, I believe on the 1st of February next, I have to request that you will inform me of it, transmitting to me as heretofore a statement of the annual account, and I will inform you what disposition to make of the money.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Bolivar, Tenn.

1. Probably Frederick P. Stanton. Letters not found.

2. Born in Virginia, planter and Democrat Spencer Jackson (c. 1801–1852?) had settled in Fayette County, Tenn., by 1837, when he became a commissioner for the Brownsville and Somerville Turnpike Company. In 1840 and 1841 he was a Fayette County justice; in 1841 he was appointed to list taxable property in District 4 of that county.

3. Marshall T. Polk (1805–31) was a younger brother of James K. Polk and the father of Marshall T. Polk, Jr., who became his uncle’s ward. Like James, the elder Marshall was born in Mecklenburg County, N.C., attended the University of North Carolina, and became a lawyer and planter. He spent his adult life in Columbia, Tenn., and Charlotte, N.C. His and Laura Theresa Wilson Polk’s other child, Roxana Eunice Ophelia, died in 1842.

TO WILLIAM H. POLK

Dear Brother:

Washington City Jany. 13th 1848

A bearer of despatches for the army in Mexico (*Mr Jackson*¹ of Penn.) leaves to night, and though I desired to have written to you at some length, I am prevented from doing so, by my pressing official duties which have occupied my time, until a late hour at night. I send you by *Mr Jackson*, a letter from your wife.² She is still in New York and was in usual health when I last heard from her. *Mrs. Polk* has written her two letters, inviting her to spend the winter with us. I have not learned whether she will do so or not, but think it probable she will visit us soon.

I most deeply regret the feuds and difficulties which have arisen among some of the officers of the army. They are well calculated to operate to the prejudice of the public service, and must if possible, be suppressed. The orders which have been issued will I hope have this effect.³ I have no time to say more on this unpleasant subject.

Genls. Quitman and *Shields* are here. *Genl. Pierce*⁴ has not arrived. You will learn shortly after the despatches, borne by the Messenger, who will hand you this letter, shall reach the Head Quarters of the army, that the existing difficulties among the high officers involved, has been referred to a Court of Enquiry to assemble at *Perote* on the of February, and that the command of the army has been devolved upon *Majr. Genl. Butler*.⁵ I learn that there is a rumour in this City, that some difference had arisen *Genl. Patterson*⁶ and yourself. I hope there may be no truth in it, or at all events that it may not be of a serious character. You should by every possible means avoid any collision, with the officers, with whom you serve. This is the duty of a good soldier, and standing in the relation you do to me, I hope you will be prepared to make some sacrifices of individual feeling if necessary, to perform it. *Genl. Patterson* has long been my friend & I hope no serious misunderstanding has arisen between you.

Congress is debating a Bill to increase the army as recommended in my message.⁷ I apprehend much delay in acting upon it, but the better opinion is, it will finally pass.

I have some anxiety to learn the reason of *Mr Trist's* remaining in Mexico. He was recalled on the 6th of October, and acknowledged the receipt of his letter of recall, before the train for *Vera Cruz*, left Mexico early in December.⁸ I fear he will commit some other *blunder* (not to use a harsher term) such as that he did commit, when without the slightest authority, he invited a proposition from the Mexican commissioners to make the *Nueces* the boundary.⁹

*Mother*¹⁰ and your other relations in Tennessee were in usual health, when I last heard from them.¹¹

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Mexico City and marked “(*Private & unofficial*).”

1. Conrad F. Jackson (1813–62) worked in a Philadelphia commission warehouse and as a conductor on the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad before Polk appointed him a lieutenant in the revenue service in 1845. Subsequently named a bearer of dispatches to Winfield Scott, he afterwards returned to that railroad. A Union general in the Civil War, he died in battle at Fredericksburg.

2. Mary Louise Corse Polk. Letter not found.

3. Polk likely refers both to General Orders, No. 2, and to the dispatch relieving Winfield Scott. See letter and notes in William L. Marcy to Polk, January 10, 1848.

4. John A. Quitman, James Shields, and Franklin Pierce.

5. William O. Butler. Headquarters remained at Mexico City.

6. Robert Patterson.

7. Ten Regiment Bill of 1848.

8. In his dispatch no. 21 to James Buchanan, dated November 27, 1847, Nicholas P. Trist acknowledged the recall notice and announced his plan to leave Mexico City for Veracruz on December 4 or 5. See part of the dispatch in Senate Executive Document No. 8, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 108–10, or Senate Executive Document No. 52, pp. 96–98.

9. Trist, on September 2, 1847, during the Armistice of Tacubaya, invited a proposal establishing Texas’s southwestern boundary at the Nueces River instead of the Rio Grande. In late August Mexico’s government had appointed four commissioners: Miguel Atristáin, José Bernardo Couto y Pérez, José Joaquín Herrera, and Ignacio Mora y Villamil. Atristáin (?–1863), a prominent lawyer born in Oaxaca, later served as a justice of the Mexican Supreme Court, 1858–59. Couto (1803–62), born in Orizaba, Veracruz, served in the Veracruz legislature in 1828 and the same year became a law professor at Mexico City’s Colegio de San Ildefonso. A moderate liberal, he was a counselor of state in 1842 and Mexico’s minister of justice for two months in 1845. After signing the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, he returned to his professorship. His works include *Colección de poesías mexicanas* (1836). Herrera (1792–1854) became, during the 1820s, a general among Mexico’s revolutionaries. A moderate liberal, he was several times minister of war and navy before serving as president, 1844, 1844–45, and 1848–51. He was second-in-command of the Mexican forces, under Santa Anna, in 1847. Illness forced his withdrawal from this commission before the completion of negotiations. Mexico City native Mora (1791 or 1792–1870), a veteran of the Spanish army, led Mexico’s Engineering Corps after the country won independence in 1821. He oversaw the construction of Mexico’s defense infrastructure and served as minister of war and navy in 1837

and 1846. A general during the war with the United States, he led troops at the Battles of Cerro Gordo and Chapultepec, oversaw the defenses around Mexico City, and negotiated the Armistice of Tacubaya before joining the commission to meet with Trist. He left that commission upon his appointment, again, as war minister; the next February, as a general, he negotiated the final armistice that ended hostilities.

10. Jane Knox Polk.

11. The most recent extant letter from a relative in Tennessee is cousin Ezekiel P. McNeal's of November 23, 1847, but Polk probably refers to law colleague James H. Thomas's of November 2.

FROM SAMUEL TEIRNEY¹

Belfast January 13. 1848

If It may please your Excellency, I am desirous to be appointed United States Consul for Belfast, now vacant by the Premature Death of my much respected Friend Mr Gilipin,² who filled the office with Dignity & Honor, both to your Excellency who appointed Him, & to all those engaged in the American Trade.

My certificate³ goes out with this Packet, if sent in Time from London, as I sent it to Sir Robt. Peel Bar[one]t.⁴ for His Signature, as I know that his Name is known very well to you, but in case it is Late for this Packet, It will go by the "*Sarah Sands*"⁵ which Sails on the 22nd Inst.

It is signed by all the *most Eminent Ferins*⁶ in the Linen & Cotton trade (of the United States) Here. In addition to this, I have been engaged as a Shipper of Linen Cloth *Entirely Irish Manufacture*, for Years, & continues Still to do So.

So your Excellency will easily perceive that as a *True Born Irishman*, & *belonging to one of the oldest Irish Familys in the Country*, my Interests are bound up with those of the United States. If She prospers, I must prosper. If she would decline, I would decline also. Such is my affinity to that Great Country over which Your Excellency presides.

At port You have a few most respectable [Friends]⁷ in New-York as referee's. Leaving my claim in your Excellency's Hands— . . .

SAMUEL TEIRNEY

Reference in New-York⁸

Messrs. Sands Fuller & C per Mr Fuller⁹

Messrs. Watt & Sherman¹⁰

Messrs. Smith Thurgar & C¹¹

Messrs. Lewis Atterbury Jr & C¹²

Reference in England—Sir Robt. Peel Bart M.P.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to “Government House, *Washington*.” From Polk’s AE: received February 5, 1848.

1. Teirney (c. 1821–1882), a British subject, was in 1845 appointed a collector for Saint Anne’s Ward, Belfast. This letter indicates that he was an Irish-born shipper of linen to the United States. In 1848 he signed a public letter to Belfast’s mayor opposing Ireland’s independence movement.

2. Philadelphian Thomas W. Gilpin (1806–48), an 1824 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, served as U.S. consul at Belfast, 1830–42 and 1845–48. He died, apparently of a heart problem, on January 4. Polk, on February 8, appointed Thomas H. Hyatt—not Teirney—as his successor.

3. Certificate not found.

4. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning. Sir Robert Peel (1788–1850) was, at the time this letter was written, a Conservative supporter in the House of Commons of Lord John Russell’s Whig government. He first had entered the Commons in 1809 and also had served as secretary for the colonies, 1811–12; secretary for Ireland, 1812–18; home secretary, 1822–27 and 1828–30; and first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer, 1834–35. He was prime minister, 1834–35 and 1841–46.

5. The *Sarah Sands*, built in Liverpool, England, in 1846, was among the first large iron screw steamers. Co-owned by New York City firm Sands, Fuller & Co. and—until its failure in late 1847—Liverpool firm Thomas & Joseph Sands & Co., the ship sailed between New York and Liverpool, 1847–49.

6. Teirney probably meant to write “Friends.”

7. Word uncertain.

8. Teirney listed his references to the left of his signature.

9. Sands, Fuller & Co. was a New York City–based importing business in the 1840s and 1850s. In February 1847 the firm donated \$250 to New York City’s General Standing Committee for the Relief of Famishing Poor in Ireland. Partner Thomas Sands lived in Liverpool, England; Joseph Sands seems to have divided his time between there and New York. Horace Fuller (?–1849) lived at times in New York (he was buried in Brooklyn) and at times in England (in 1846 he lived in Manchester). In 1847 Fuller sailed to England in April and returned to New York, on the *Sarah Sands*, on September 23.

10. Watt & Sherman was the New York City importing business, established in the mid-1840s, of William Watt and Thaddeus Sherman, Jr. In February 1847 it gave one hundred dollars to the General Standing Committee.

11. Smith, Thurgar & Co., from the 1830s to the 1850s, was the New York City importing house of Cunningham Smith and George C. C. Thurgar. The firm gave fifty dollars to the General Standing Committee in February 1847.

12. Lewis Atterbury, Jr. & Co. was a New York City importing house in the 1840s and 1850s.

TO AARON V. BROWN

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Jany. 16th 1848

I wrote to you last night, a letter relating exclusively to my private business. I would be glad to communicate at some length with you, concerning public affairs, but my labours, are so severe and constant, that I am compelled to give up allmost entirely, all attempt to correspond with my friends. I can only now say, that the opposition are becoming bolder in resisting supplies of men and money for the prosecution of the war, than they were at the opening of Congress. I think it more doubtful whether any additional force will be granted. A military Bill may pass in some form, but if so, it will probably be delayed to so late a period as seriously to embarrass the Government.¹

You have no doubt seen in the newspapers, an account of the unfortunate collisions and difficulties which have arisen among some of the high officers of the army in Mexico. Harmony among the officers highest in command has been broken up; This has given me great anxiety. I can say to you confidentially, that charges have been made by *Genl. Scott* against *Genls. Pillow* and *Worth*, and *Lieut. Col. Duncan*²; and by *Genl. Worth* against *Genl. Scott*. Under the Rules & articles of War,³ it was my duty to act upon the charges preferred, either by ordering a General Court martial to try these officers, or to organize a Court of enquiry. I have adopted the latter course, and the Secretary of War⁴ has ordered a Court of Enquiry to convene at *Perote* in Mexico, in the latter part of February.⁵ Upon their report I must decide whether it is necessary, to order a General Court martial for the trial of any or all of these officers. *Genls. Worth* and *Pillow* & *Lieut. Col. Duncan*, who are under arrest, have been ordered to be released from arrest, until the report of the Court of Enquiry shall be made. *Genl. Scott* has been recalled from the command of the army in Mexico, and the command has been devolved on *Majr. Genl. Wm. O. Butler*.⁶ The messenger bearing these orders was despatched two or three days ago.⁷

You have seen from my annual message, that I have recalled *Mr Trist*. He has thrown himself into *Genl. Scott's* hands, and has greatly embarrassed the Government, by inviting without the slightest authority, a proposition from Mexico, to make the Nueces the boundary. It is scarcely necessary to say, that such a proposition would be instantly rejected. *Mr Trist* has acted worse in this and other respects, than any public functionary I have ever known. Against his positive order of recal, the receipt of which he has acknowledged, he still remains in Mexico, and I fear may still further embarrass the Government. With an unscrupulous opposition at home, and faithless agents, abroad I am, greatly embarrassed. I will however stand firmly upon my ground, do

my duty, and leave the rest to God and to the country. I have the utmost confidence that I will sustained by the country. I have given you these traits⁸ most *confidentially* & you will of course regard them as such.

We have heard nothing from your State convention, which was to have assembled at Nashville on the 8th Instant.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville and marked “(*Private & confidential*).”

1. Polk here discusses the Ten Regiment Bill of 1848.
2. Gideon J. Pillow, William J. Worth, and James Duncan.
3. See letter and notes in Pillow to Polk, November 23 and 27, 1847.
4. William L. Marcy.
5. General Orders, No. 2.
6. Polk refers to Marcy’s dispatches and enclosure to Winfield Scott of January 13, 1848; see letter and notes in Marcy to Polk, January 10, 1848.
7. Conrad F. Jackson left Washington City the night of January 13, 1848.
8. Polk uses a now-obsolete meaning of the word “trait”: “passage of written text.”

FROM ANDREW M. ROBINSON¹

Honle. Sir— Lebanon, New London Coty, Connt.—Jany 16th 1848

I take the liberty of addressing every Democratic President since the election of Prsident Jefferson² relative to the *political* feelings of the two parties in old Connt. As the time is rapidly approaching when we shall be led to a choice to fill the high station which your Honor has occupied to the *satisfaction* of the Democracy in our region, and contrary to the feelings, will and wishes of the Tories of our Country, your Honor will pardon me for the boldness.

Your Honr.’s time has nearly expired, should you again be nominated for that office you would receive every *true* Democratic vote in New England.

The measures your Honor has taken relative to the affairs with Mexico has met the *firm* approval of the Democracy of New England. We have only wishd. you had Sent sufficient numbe of Troops at one & the same time to *cut* their progress through the very Bowels of Mexico, and had the *Spoils* fed, clothed and sustained the American Army in every particular, It is the opinion of the Democracy at the North, the bones of our brave soldiers would not lay bleaching on the prairies and Mountains of the Montezumes.³

The Army has done well, none has ever equld., the Whigs want the *credit* of the Victories, they want Mexico, they want peace but cannot bear to receive through a Democratic Administration. Who is to be the

next President, is the voice of both parties. Our northern Whigs Still hold out Henry Clay. New England States cant elect a President without the assistant of the South & West.

The Whigs in the New England States entertain this Idea, that, as all the Religion & Morality is under *their* thumb, so ought the Government to be, but, they cant, come it, no how! The annexation of Texas, will be an *Eternal honor* to the name of J K Polk so long as his bones remain entombd. in the Earth, and his Patriotic soul in Heaven. Your Honor may think I am taking greate liberty as a Stranger, But Sir, with none other than a true hearted American do I associate, too well am I acquainted with Monarchial and Despotic Governments to show them the least compliment of civility when the rights of my Country are trampled. The treatment I received in 1812 on board a British Man of War has satisfied me, that a Republican Government is far the most agreeable.

Allow me to say, if you will carry out the recommendation's containd. in your Honors last Message to Congress, it will be an *Eternal honor* to yourself and an everlasting benefit to all Nations.

AND M ROBINSON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received January 25, 1848.

1. Connecticut native Robinson (1789–1851) lived or worked at times in Bozrah, Norwich, and Lebanon. He operated a hotel and store in Salem, 1833–35; according to the 1840 census his household was involved in agriculture. He was a delegate to the New London County Democratic Convention on February 24, 1848. By the fall of 1850, he had retired and moved to Houston, Tex. This letter suggests that he was impressed or imprisoned by the British in 1812.

2. On Thomas Jefferson as a “Democratic President,” see note in Polk to James G. M. Ramsey, October 30, 1847.

3. Since the 1830s the U.S. press had referred to the past or current inhabitants of Mexico as “the Montezumas”—after the Aztec emperors of that name—in such phrases as “the ancestors of the Montezumas,” “the city of the Montezumas,” and, referring to Mexico City's National Palace, “the Halls of the Montezumas.”

TO JOHN M. BASS

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Jany. 17th 1848

I have received your letter of the 6th Inst., enclosing to me a draft on the cashier of the Philad. Bank,¹ for \$565. being the amt. due me for the rent of my house for the last year (\$500), and the amt. (\$65.) advanced

to your son *William*.² I enclose to you the two due-bills which I took from *William* when I handed him the money.³ I am glad to learn that he reached home safely.

I was much surprised to learn that any difficulty had arisen in regard to the title to the property, formerly belonging to the Heirs of *Mr Grundy*⁴ which I have bought. I certainly never should have purchased, if the *avenue* leading from *church street* to the House had not been included in the purchase. Indeed *that avenue* was a leading inducement with me, to pay the price I did for the property. I purchased *all* the title to the *avenue*, which *Mr Grundy* held at the time of his death. So *Judge Catron* who acted in conjunction with *Gov. Brown*⁵ as my agent understod it, at the time the purchase was made. No other thought ever entered my head and I repeat I never would have purchased, if it had not been so. What was the property sold and bought? It was, the House and *all* the grounds about it, including the *avenue* which had been owned by *Mr Grundy* at his death & which had been inherited by his *heirs*. I bought *all* and not a *part* of this property. I have said that the *avenue* was a main inducement with me to make the purchase, not that I ever expected to close it up, for it could never be my interest to do so. I do desire however to improve it, sitting⁶ out trees, *McAdimizing*⁷ or paving it, and by making side walks from the street to the House. It would be worse than useless to me, if it was regarded as a public common, which might be converted into a wagon-yard, or a space where a nuisance to the balance of the property might be placed. I regret extremely that you take a different view of it, and I still, think that upon reflection you will be convinced of your error. *Mr McGavocck*⁸ and yourself are the Executors of *Mr Grundy*. In that character, and perhaps with the aid of the chancery Court (I am not certain how that is) you offerred for sale *all* the property, including the dwelling-house, out-houses, and *all* the grounds, about them, or attached to them, of which *Mr Grundy* died seized,⁹ without making any reservation, and without giving any noticee, that *all* was not included in the sale. Surely then I am entitled to *all*. If *Mr Grundy* had in his life-time made any stipulations, with any of the owners of property adjoining the *avenue*, of which I know nothing, such stipulation, may bind me, but surely, it could never have been contemplated by *Mr McGavock & yourself*, when as Executors, you were selling the property, that this part of it (*the avenue*) should in effect be converted into a public street, to which I was to have no more title, and over which I was to have no more control, than any other citizen of the town. I hope on reviewing the subject, you will be satisfied, and that the title may be made to me for *all* that I purchased. The *avenue* fronts the House to *church street*. It will be the approach to the House, and

must be kept open for my own convenience, and will of course be open to the use of others, adjoining, to which I should never of object, provided it was used as a pass-way, and no nuisances, were placed in it, which would be injurious to the property. I have written to *Mr Stevenson*,¹⁰ and hope if you are satisfied on the subject, as I think you must be, that you will cause the Deed to made, and delivered to him. As all the consideration money has been paid, I wish to have the transaction closed.

With my respects to *Mrs. Bass*¹¹: . . .

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. T–WRC. Addressed to Nashville. See also ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

1. John B. Trevor (1787 or 1788–1860) was cashier of the Philadelphia Bank, 1835–51. Born in England, he served in the Pennsylvania House, 1818–19; as state treasurer, 1820–21; as a director of the Bank of the United States, 1829; and as cashier of the Western Bank of Philadelphia, 1832–35. During Polk's administration he was an agent for paying interest on the federal debt.

2. William J. Bass.

3. Enclosures not found.

4. Felix Grundy.

5. John Catron and Aaron V. Brown.

6. In a now-obsolete usage, "sit" was a synonym of "set."

7. Macadamizing was the method of road repair invented by Scot John L. McAdam (1756–1836).

8. Jacob McGavock.

9. In a legal or, otherwise, archaic sense, "to be seized of" means "to possess."

10. Polk to Vernon K. Stevenson, January 13, 1848.

11. Malvina Chenault Grundy Bass.

FROM JAMES M. HOWRY¹

My Dear Sir,

Steamer "Marshall Ney"² 17 Jan'y 1848

I am on my way home from Jackson where I have been attending the state Convention³ & meeting of the Trustees of the state university.⁴

The Newspapers will convey to you the proceedings of the Convention but I presume you will not have time to read them, and I think it will afford some gratification to a faithful public servant (while he is receiving censure) to receive evidence of decided approbation.

I was a good deal disappointed to find so much unanimity existing among Democrats as was manifested in this occasion, and atho' The resolutions are strong enough, yet they do not show the enthusiasm which prevailed on the occasion. Your name was never mentioned but with rounds of applause and I never witnessed more zeal for a President; even in Gen Jacksons palmiest days.

Our County meeting⁵ nominated you & Mr Dallas⁶ for re-election and If the move had been made in our state Convention it would have gone through like a flash & with great cheer.

But, owing to your repeated declarations that you would in no event be a candidate for reelection it was thought best to pass that question by for the present.

The question was on the eve of being put as to the choice of the Convention and if it had been taken Mr Dallas & Gen Quitman⁷ would have been nominated so far as I could learn the opinions of the members. A move was made to substitute Mr Buchanan, but the whole subject was laid on the table. Since the adjournment of the Convention we recd. Gen Cass' letter on the Wilmot Proviso⁸ and the effect of the collision in Pennsylvania between the friends of Mr Dallas & Mr Buchanan⁹ will likely add to Gen Cass' chances. The south had lost sight of him. He had been addressed on the subject of the W. Proviso & did not respond,¹⁰ and a conversation in the Senate not reported but attributed to him,¹¹ the south set him down against them. But his late letter & his course on the war & his general support of your admis will tend to reinstate him with the south.

Jefferson Davis has beaten Maj Barton,¹² and I fear the north will not hereafter think well of the south for this act.

It is said now by Whigs that they have every assurance from Washington that Col Davis is a Taylor man and we fear ther is too much truth in the suspicion.

We hope for the sake of his fame & character that this will turn out false. But, a few short months will tell. John C. Calhoun is losing many of his friends here & I hope he will lose all unless he becomes more patriotic & americanized in his feelings. We also fear old Bullion¹³ will be found against you.

In conclusion, you have cause to be proud of your friends in Mississippi. Never was a mans course more triumphantly sustained than yours. A riot scene occurred, I had like to have omitted, Geo Poindexter¹⁴ asked leave to address the Convention. Some Democrats objected unless he could be "vouched for." He was "vouched for" and He gave it to Clay, & Gallatin¹⁵ in particular—Made a formal confession & declared "that every act of the Admrn. was right & vigorous" in "the prosecution of the war & in its inception." He too is "writing a Book." "O tempora o mores."¹⁶

Pardon me for troubling you. But never was administration more worthy of support and never did I see more strong manifestations of approbation than on the occasion referred to.

JAMES M HOWRY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked Memphis, January 19. From Polk's AE: received January 28, 1848.

1. Virginia native Howry (1804–84) worked for Tennessee merchants and in the Hawkins County, Tenn., chancery court clerk's office before becoming a lawyer. He served as a Tennessee House and Senate clerk, then moved to Oxford, Miss., in 1836 and was elected a circuit court judge in 1841. He was a University of Mississippi trustee, 1844–70, and the university's proctor, 1848–56.

2. Built by A. Vinal and owned by A. H. Hodgman, the steam brig *Marshal Ney* was launched in January 1848. It carried freight and passengers between Nashville and New Orleans.

3. The Mississippi Democratic State Convention was held in Jackson on January 8, 1848.

4. Chartered by the state legislature in 1844, the University of Mississippi, in Oxford, opened in November 1848. Its board of trustees met on January 11, 1848.

5. Reference is presumably to the Lafayette County, Miss., Democratic Convention.

6. George M. Dallas.

7. John A. Quitman.

8. In his letter to Alfred O. P. Nicholson, dated December 24, 1847, which appeared in the Washington *Daily Union* of December 30 and subsequently in other newspapers, Lewis Cass outlines his opposition to the Wilmot Proviso. Favoring an "indemnity" of land from Mexico—though leaving its extent up to the president—Cass admits "regret [for] the existence of slavery" but denies Congress's authority to ban or permit it in a state or territory. He favors what came to be known as popular sovereignty: the people of any land acquired from Mexico should decide the slavery question. The Wilmot Proviso's passage, moreover, would both "impair the union of the States" and guarantee Senate rejection of a treaty involving a Mexican cession; even the expectation of its passage would lead members of Congress to vote against supplies for the troops. Cass notes that the proviso would, if legislated, apply only until statehood; putting it in the treaty, however, would give Mexico power over states' affairs. Finally, Cass denies that expanding slavery's breadth would increase the number of slaves or, for that matter, that California or New Mexico would have slavery even if allowed to.

9. Reference is to Dallas's "Family" party and James Buchanan's "Amalgamator" party.

10. No specific inquiry to Cass about the Wilmot Proviso to which Howry likely refers has been identified.

11. On March 1, 1847, Cass spoke in the Senate against the Wilmot Proviso, which the House had amended to the Three Million Dollar Bill. Sen. Jacob W. Miller, of New Jersey, pointed out that Cass had supported the proviso the previous August, when the House had amended it to the Two Million Dollar Bill. The *Congressional Globe* does not record Cass's reply to Miller but, according to the next day's *Washington Daily Union*, Cass admitted his changed position

and asserted, "circumstances had altogether changed." He repeated part of his speech by way of explanation, including his assertion that a postwar act of Congress creating a territorial government would supersede the proviso.

12. Roger Barton.

13. Thomas H. Benton's nickname, "Old Bullion," arose from his strong support for hard currency.

14. Lawyer George Poindexter (1779–1853), a Virginia native, served Mississippi Territory as attorney general, 1803–7; legislator, 1806; delegate to Congress, 1807–13; and U.S. district judge, 1813–17. After Mississippi achieved statehood, he served in the U.S. House, 1817–19; as governor, 1820–22; and in the U.S. Senate, 1830–35. Long a supporter of Andrew Jackson, he broke with that president during his time in the Senate. He afterwards practiced law in Kentucky and, finally, in Jackson, Miss.

15. Henry Clay and Albert Gallatin. Democratic-Republican politician Gallatin (1761–1849), who immigrated from Switzerland in 1780, served in the U.S. House, 1795–1801; as secretary of the Treasury, 1801–14; and as minister to France, 1815–23, and the United Kingdom, 1826–27. President of the National Bank of New York, 1831–39, and founding president of the American Ethnological Society, 1842–49, he opposed Texas annexation, bellicosity over Oregon, and the Mexican War. In late 1847 he published *Peace with Mexico*, to which Howry probably refers. In that essay Gallatin blames the war on the United States' unjust "occupation" of land between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande and calls for a peace involving, at most, a small land cession by Mexico to satisfy its debts to Americans. Gallatin describes the war as inimical to America's mission as a "Model Republic" and denies Americans' "superiority of race over the Mexicans." By the end of 1847, one publisher had reissued Gallatin's essay in a pamphlet together with Clay's antiwar Lexington, Ky., speech of November 13. *Speech of the Hon. Henry Clay, Delivered at Lexington, Ky., Nov. 13, 1847: and Letter of the Hon. Albert Gallatin, on the Mexican War* (Louisville, Ky.: John C. Noble, 1847). Later in 1848 Gallatin published another short book, *War Expenses*.

16. This exclamation, Latin for "o the times, o the morals," appears in four works of Cicero: *In Verrem* 2.4.25.56, *In Catilinam* 1.2, *De Domo Sua* 53.137, and *Pro Rege Deiotaro* 11.31.

FROM PICKETT, PERKINS & CO.

Sir

New Orleans Jany 17th 1848

Conforming to yours of 24th November last, we have now to advise that we have received from your plantation in Mississippi 100 Bales Cotton for your acct. on which we have effected insurance against fire while on store with us, and hold the same subject to your further instructions. This Cotton is strictly "good middling," or quite "middling fair" in character, and is worth to-day in our market 7 1/4.

Referring you to the annexed Price current for particulars of our cotton market,¹

PICKETT, PERKINS & CO

L in William S. Pickett's hand. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "pt Mail." From Polk's AE: received January 26, 1848; "Ansd. Feby. 28th 1848" (Polk refers erroneously to his reply of February 29, 1848).

1. The company enclosed the *New-Orleans Price-Current, Commercial Intelligencer and Merchants' Transcript* of January 15, 1848. That newspaper featured a chart of commercial data including prices for exports, imports, and wholesale goods at New Orleans and amounts of cotton stocked, received, and exported there and at other American ports. DLC—JKP.

FROM DANIEL GRAHAM

[Washington City, c. January 20, 1848]¹

On the 4 the Tenne Legislature nominated Taylor for Prest. Muirhead, Bells² special friend, was principal supporter. Williams³ of Knox against it, & all the demo[crat]s⁴ except one. Jones, Caruthers, Stokes & Bryan are at Nashville standing up for Clay. Foster⁵ trying stand up for him but shivering under the Legislative vote. Fosters special friends & Gov Neils⁶ denouncing each other. Allen A⁷ standing up for Rough & Ready⁸ stronger than ever & the Banner⁹ in a quandary. Nothing from the demo[cratic] Convention.

GRAHAM

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed locally. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received January 20, 1848; "*Private*."

1. Place identified from local address to Polk; approximate date identified from Joseph Knox Walker's AE.

2. John Muirhead and John Bell. Muirhead (c. 1804?–1860), a Scottish-born Whig, was a Lebanon, Tenn., businessman and farmer. He served as Lebanon mayor, 1829–30, before representing Wilson County in the Tennessee House, 1841–43, and Senate, 1845–49. In 1842 he became a founding trustee of Lebanon's Southern University.

3. Joseph L. Williams.

4. Letters here and below inserted to complete probable meanings.

5. James C. Jones, Robert L. Caruthers, Jordan Stokes, possibly John S. Brien, Henry Clay, and Ephraim H. Foster. Lawyer Caruthers (1800–1882) was clerk of the Tennessee House, 1823–24, and edited the Carthage *Tennessee Republican*, 1824–25. Moving to Wilson County, he served as attorney general for Tennessee's Sixth Judicial District, 1827–32; in the state house, 1835–37; and as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1841–43. He sat on the Tennessee Supreme Court, 1852–61. Though elected governor in 1863, he never served, due to Tennessee's occupation by the Union army. Stokes (1817–86), born in

North Carolina and raised in Tennessee, studied law in Nashville, 1837–38, and practiced in Carthage and then Lebanon, Tenn. He served in the state house as a Whig, 1839–41 and 1851–53, and in the state senate as a member of the Opposition party, 1859–61. Brien (1807–67), a Carthage, Tenn., lawyer born in Virginia, served in the Tennessee House as a Whig, 1837–39, and as a Conservative, 1866–67. He was a presidential elector for Zachary Taylor, 1848, and judge of the chancery court at Nashville, 1851–53. Foster (1794–1854) was a Nashville lawyer and an early leader of the Whig party in Tennessee. Appointed to the U.S. Senate after the resignation of Felix Grundy in 1838, he won election to a full term that commenced in March 1839 but resigned the following November amid disagreements with the state legislature's Democratic majority. He served an interim term in the Senate, 1843–45.

6. Neill S. Brown.

7. Allen A. Hall (c. 1803–1867) edited the *Nashville Whig*, 1845–49. Born in North Carolina, he practiced law in Nashville before editing that city's *Republican and State Gazette*, 1826–34; *National Banner*, 1834–37; and *Republican Banner*, 1837–41. He served as chargé d'affaires to Venezuela, 1841–45. In 1849 Zachary Taylor appointed him register of the Treasury; he later served as minister to Bolivia, 1863–67.

8. Zachary Taylor's troops gave him the epithet "Old Rough and Ready" during his command, 1837–40, in the Second Seminole War.

9. The *Nashville Republican Banner*, that city's first successful daily newspaper, began operating in 1837. Organized by Bell, the daily replaced two earlier Whig newspapers based in Nashville, the *National Banner* and the *Republican*, and became the chief voice for the state's Whigs.

FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir

Columbia Ten Jan. 22nd 1848

On my return home a few days ago, from my plantation I received yours of the 24th Nov. 47. wishing me to inform Mr Mairs what amount of Harrys¹ hire is due. I have informed Mr Mairs that the hire for the year 1847. is due you. When I was in Carrolton last winter I did not see the Gentleman that hired Harry² But left Instructions with Maj Jas Money³ to take Bond & good security which I have no doubt Maj Money did. I do not recolect the name of the Gentleman that hired Harry. I have instructed Mr Mairs to call on Money for the note or proceeds of Harry hire which (if I am not Mistaken) is \$275. The Balance of Harrys hire for 1846. was sent here by Maj Money to Jas H. Thomas⁴ & placed to Jas H Thomas credit in the Union Bank in Columbia after deducting a Balance that was due me, which John P. Campbell⁵ forwarded Thomas or you a statement of.⁶ I started a letter to Mr Mairs on yesterday giving him a statement of the facts & wishing him to remain as per contract which was \$500. for the present years services. I handed the

E Young⁷ notes to Mr Thomas when he left here to hand to Stephenson⁸ in Nashville. I still hold the McCrady⁹ notes subject to your order.

I wish to know whether you have made any arrangement to get my son Robert Bruce Campbell¹⁰ in the Military Accadamy at West Point or not & if you have at what time I shall send him on. He is not at school at this time and should like to get him in there as soon as posible. He is of good sise & I expect he is prepared to enter the Institution. You will pleas apprise me all about what will be nessary if there should be any chance to get him in.

ROBT CAMPBELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received February 1, 1848; answered February 11, 1848; "Relates to my pivate business, at my plantation in Mississippi."

1. John A. Mairs and Long Harry.

2. The name of the man who hired Long Harry in 1847 is unknown. For some of his earlier employers, see note in Polk to Robert Campbell, Jr., November 24, 1847.

3. James Money.

4. James H. Thomas.

5. John Polk Campbell (1804–52), a brother of Robert Campbell, Jr., and a first cousin of the president, was born in Mecklenburg County, N.C., and later lived in Maury County, Tenn. He founded Springfield, Mo., in the 1820s and 1830s and thereafter farmed and traded with Mexico and Texas. John became Greene County, Mo., clerk in 1833 and was receiver of public monies at Springfield, 1839–42. He served under Col. Alexander W. Doniphan in the Mexican War, attaining the rank of major.

6. Statement not found.

7. Evan Young.

8. Vernon K. Stevenson.

9. Ephraim W. McRady (1801–72), a Columbia, Tenn., carpenter from Kentucky—and, at least by 1855, a Democrat—purchased land west of Columbia from Polk and Samuel H. Laughlin in 1846. Payment was spread over four years.

10. Robert Bruce Campbell (1831–51)—not to be confused with U.S. consul at Havana, Cuba, Robert B. Campbell—was a Tennessee-born son of Robert Campbell, Jr., and Elizabeth Polk Campbell and thus the president's first cousin, once removed. Polk appointed him a U.S. Military Academy cadet in 1849. Before graduating, however, he died in Ripley, Miss.

FROM GEORGE BANCROFT

My dear Sir,

London 28. January 1848

I cannot let this steamer go to America without saying to you myself how greatly I was delighted with your message. The compact logic is

irresistible; and the policy recommended with admirable dialectics was exactly the counterpoint & consequence of the previous argument. While I very much, for your sake & for the sake of our country & world, that we could make peace, I think your present position the only tenable one. In Paris I met Alexander von Humboldt,¹ & he gave me leave to say to you, how greatly he was pleased with it. The amount of territory you demand, he deemed to be legitimately due to us: & the tone of moderation that prevails through the message won for it his candid, unhesitating adhesion. His opinion is of value; for having been honored with Mexican citizenship, the bias of his partialities is for Mexico.

The uproar in the English prints I have already explained to you.² This is a proud nation; and loves to interfere in the affairs of other countries: would have loved the possibility of becoming the protector of Mexico. But it does not attempt it, and conceals its own humiliating sense of weakness, partly by undervaluing our successes and partly by calumniating and falsifying the character of our nation in its conduct towards Mexico.

Last Saturday I received personally an honor that in itself & in the manner in which it was conferred on me, gave me so much pleasure, that I cannot but communicate it to you. The Institute of France,³ has a small & limited number of correspondents, selected from the men of letters & science in all parts of the world. To be one of these few, is a distinction very much coveted and often very perseveringly solicited. A vacancy having occurred in the section of History in the Academy of the moral & political sciences, the section without my previous knowledge unanimously placed my name at the head of the list from which the vacancy was to be filled; and last Saturday, five names having been presented to the Academy as candidates, I received every vote for the vacant place but one. This majority was pleasing: and As the election was a spontaneous act, wholly unsolicited on my part, the manner in which the appointment came to me was as agreeable as the honor itself.

I beg my best regards to Mrs Polk.

GEORGE BANCROFT

ALS, press copy. MHi. Probably addressed to Washington City. Published in *LLGB*, pp. 29–30.

1. Trained at Göttingen University, scientist Friedrich Heinrich Alexander, Baron von Humboldt, (1769–1859) conducted research trips to Mexico and South America, 1799–1803, and to Asiatic Russia, 1829. He wrote or cowrote numerous books on science and culture. Between 1830 and 1845, Prussia's kings sent him on several political missions to Paris.

2. Letter not found.

3. France's revolutionary government established the Institute of France in 1795 to replace the royal academies that it had abolished two years earlier.

This scholarly umbrella organization was divided into units—initially called classes and in 1816 renamed academies—dedicated to various areas of study. King Louis Philippe re-established the Academy of Moral and Political Sciences, previously eliminated by Napoléon Bonaparte in 1803, in 1832.

TO LYDIA ELIZA POLK CALDWELL¹

Dear Sister:

Washington City Jany. 31st 1848

Your letter of the 17th Instant addressed to *Mrs. Polk*² was received by her, on yesterday. It reminds me that I ought, (as I intended to have done) long since to have written to you. If I have not done so, it was because of my constant public engagements, and not because I do not take a deep interest in your welfare. I am glad to learn that you have adapted yourself to your condition, and are giving strict attention to your business. I am pleased too, to learn that since you have been thrown upon your own resources, your situation has been comfortable, and that you have been prosperous, in the management of your farm. The advice which I gave you,³ shortly after I heard of the death, of your lamented husband,⁴ to have the estate divided between yourself and your two sons,⁵ and to hold your share seperately I am sure you will find was wise. My advice to you now is, to manage your own business, as you are doing, and to retain in your own hands, whatever you may be able to accumulate. Your sons have a competency upon which to commence business for themselves. You may yet live many years, and may yet need all you have, to ensure your comfort in old age. I would retain my own property, and if after some years, you shall find that you can conveniently aid either of your sons, without depriving yourself of any necessary comfort, it will be time enough to do so. A parent should never, if it can be avoided, become dependent on a child. There is one suggestion which you make in your letter, in which I differ with you in opinion. You speak of building a new house, or of making an addition to the present house. I do not think, this would be adviseable. If you were to add to your present buildings, it would not probably enable you to sell your place, for any more than you could sell it without such improvement. If you could sell your place for a fair price & buy one nearer your relations at *Bolivar*,⁶ I think you would be better satisfied. I have intended to suggest this to you before, but I do not advise it, unless you can procure a place with which you would be pleased and could make an advantageous exchange. If you think of doing so, I would consult *Majr. Bills* and *Majr. McNeal*,⁷ before I acted. They are both good judges of property, and would give you good advice. Until you can make such an exchange, I would remain where you are, and cultivate your farm, adding every year to your means. I hope you will visit mother,⁸ as you say, you will. I wish I could do so, but that is impossible, until the close of my term.

I hope that your son *James* is [sturdy],⁹ and that he may make a useful man. It would probably be gratifying to him, and might be of service to him, to spend a few weeks at Washington during the present session of Congress. The month of *April* or *May* will be a pleasant season, and if you concur with me in opinion you can say to him, that I would be pleased to see him here at that time. Should he do so, he will of course come directly to the President's mansion, and make a part of my family during his visit. He would have an opportunity to see Congress in session, and would be improved by the visit.¹⁰

When I last heard from brother *William*,¹¹ he was in the City of Mexico. He had been sick, but had recovered, and was pleased with a military life. His last letter was written about the middle of December.¹² His wife,¹³ is a well educated and sensible woman. We are pleased with her. She is with her mother¹⁴ in New York. We expect her to spend some weeks with us soon.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Should you prefer a place near *Memphis* instead of *Bolivar*; or should you prefer some other part of the country to either, it would not be advisable to spend money in improving your present place. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Haywood County, Tenn.

1. Polk's sister Lydia Eliza (1800–1864), known as Eliza, was born in Mecklenburg County, N.C., and married Silas M. Caldwell in Maury County, Tenn., in 1817. They settled in Haywood County. Widowed in 1846, she later remarried to Edward Richmond.

2. Letter not found.

3. Polk to Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell, April 6, 1846.

4. Silas M. Caldwell (1794–1846) was a planter and physician. A friend of the president, he was Polk's partner in purchasing the Yalobusha County, Miss., plantation in 1834.

5. Eliza and Silas Caldwell's sons were Samuel P. and James M. Caldwell. Samuel (1818–85), born in Columbia, Tenn., stayed at the White House in early 1846 and August 1848. By 1849 he had moved to Memphis, where he practiced law. James (1828–68), born in Haywood County, was a student in 1846.

6. Polk probably refers chiefly to Ezekiel P. McNeal, his and Eliza's first cousin; Ann Williams McNeal, Ezekiel's wife; and John H. Bills, Ezekiel's brother-in-law, all of whom lived in Bolivar, Tenn. Ann Williams (1817–75), daughter of Hardeman County, Tenn., farmer Joseph J. Williams, married Ezekiel McNeal at Bolivar in 1835. Bills (1800–1871), a North Carolina-born founder of Bolivar who became a merchant, planter, postmaster, and Democratic leader there, married Ezekiel's sister, Prudence Tate McNeal, in 1823 (she died in 1840). Bills and Ezekiel McNeal formed a business partnership in Bolivar in the late 1820s.

7. John H. Bills and Ezekiel P. McNeal.

8. Jane Knox Polk.
9. Word uncertain, possibly "steady," blurred ink transfer.
10. Despite this invitation, James M. Caldwell seems not to have visited Washington City. Neither Polk's diary nor any located correspondence mentions such a visit.
11. William H. Polk.
12. Letter not found.
13. Mary Louise Corse Polk.
14. New York native Abigail Cornell (1776–1854), in 1795, married merchant Jacob Doughty (or Doty), who died in 1798 or 1799. In 1810 she married Israel Corse, who died in 1842. She remained in New York City after Israel's death.

FROM JOHN A. GARDNER

Dear Sir Adalia, Weakley Co. Tennessee January 31st 1848

I am indebted to your kind remembrance of me, for a copy of your able and admirable Veto Message, containing your objections to the passage of the Internal Improvement Bill of the last Session of Congress.¹

I am rejoiced to see you adhere, with so much unflinching firmness, and commendable consistency, to the wise and prudent doctrines of our *early* Republicans, the Authors of the Federal Constitution, and the Founders of our Political System.

We must, occasionally, derive lessons of wisdom and safety from the History of the earlier and purer days of the Republic, when her Statesmen were wise patriotic, and *unselfish*. The necessity for recurring to first principles, is yearly becoming more urgent from the fact, that each successive Congress, encouraged by the example of the preceding one, departs still more widely from the letter and spirit of the Constitution, until we are actually in danger of being lost in the broad and trackless field of constructed powers, without a single land-mark to guide us. As The Star directed the Philosophers of old, to "the babe in the manger,"² so must a wise and independent exercise of the Veto power, lead back our erring statesmen to the cradle of the Constitution. *There* its body and spirit may both be found, and not elsewhere.

To the views presented to Congress, in your last annual Message, on the War question I yield a most cordial approval. Many of them, I urged in my last summers fruitless canvass for Congress.

To your political friends in this quarter, your Administration has given the fullest measure of satisfaction; and the noisy lips of many of your enemies have been sealed by its practical wisdom.

We all sincerely regret that any pledge to serve but a single term, lies in the way of your re-nomination. You are falsely charged with having unconstitutionally begun the existing War with Mexico. You

have hitherto conducted it with unparalleled vigour and success, and we want you to realize the full honor of bringing it to a brilliant and glorious conclusion. The perpetrators of “moral treason,”³ those of our citizens whose sympathies are wasted on Mexico, whose voices and influence are against their own Government, in a Foreign War, will live to lick the dust of merited infamy, and to shrink from the withering gaze of an indignant people, by whose scorn and contempt they will be ultimately consumed.

My brother, Doctor Gardner,⁴ is now in Mexico, acting, under your kind appointment, as Assistant Surgeon, to the 4t Regt. of Tenn. Volunteers. He intends remaining until the close of the War, and desires me to say to you, that as vacancies are often occurring, in the office of Principal Surgeon in the Regiments, he would be thankful to you to promote him. He is poor, and needs the additional pay. Will you do me the personal favor to take his claims into consideration?

I feel some hesitation and delicacy in once more bringing to your notice the name and claims of my friend, F. W. Behn.⁵

Could you not give him a consular appointment somewhere in France or the German States?

Excuse my troubling you so often with my long letters. Charge it to the account of our early Friendship.

JNO. A. GARDNER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received February 11, 1848.

1. Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill of 1847.

2. The biblical story of the visit by “wise men” to the baby Jesus appears in Matthew 2:1–12. This paraphrase, however, most closely resembles Luke 2:16: “the babe lying in a manger.”

3. Beginning in late 1846, Democratic newspapers described Whigs’ sympathy for and encouragement of Mexican resistance as “moral treason.” Decades earlier, as Polk recalls in letters to Robert Armstrong on April 29 and to Hopkins L. Turney on May 15, 1847, Felix Grundy had used the term to describe Federalist opponents of the War of 1812.

4. Richard W. Gardner (1807–51) lived in Robertson and Weakley Counties, Tenn., before being appointed an army assistant surgeon on September 28, 1847, after his wife’s death. He served until July 20, 1848; he did not receive a promotion. After the war he moved to Dresden, Tenn., then to Commerce, Miss.

5. Born in Germany, Frederick W. Behn (1799–1875) was a Mills Point, Ky., merchant in 1839 and 1840. Appointed by Polk on March 9, 1848, and reappointed by later presidents, he served as consul at Messina—first in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and then in Italy—1848–49, 1854–59, intermittently during the Civil War, and 1867–75; he was vice consul there at other times. No earlier letter about him from John A. Gardner to Polk has been found.

FEBRUARY

FROM JEFFERSON DAVIS ET AL.¹

Washington Feb'y. 1848

The undersigned, Members of Congress from the State of Mississippi, and elsewhere, respectfully recommend to your Excellency Mr. *Thomas J. Johnston Jr*² a citizen of said State, for an appointment as one of the Judges of the Territory of Minesota, a bill for the organization of which is now before Congress.³

JEFFN. DAVIS

NS. DNA–RG 59. Enclosed in Davis to Polk, March 2, 1848.

1. Letter, written in an unknown hand, bears the signatures of Davis, Henry S. Foote, Albert G. Brown, Winfield S. Featherston, and Patrick W. Tompkins. Brown (1813–80), born in South Carolina, moved to Mississippi as a child and became a lawyer in Gallatin. A Democrat, he served in the state house, 1835–39; in the U.S. House, 1839–41 and 1847–53; as a circuit superior court judge, 1842–43; as governor, 1844–48; and in the U.S. Senate, 1854–61. He served in the Confederate Senate during the Civil War. Featherston (1820–91), born in Tennessee, served in the Creek War of 1836 and became a Houston, Miss., lawyer. A Democrat, he served in the U.S. House, 1847–51. Later he became a Confederate brigadier general.

2. Johnston (c. 1820–1855), a Mississippi lawyer born in Kentucky, was admitted to the bar of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1844. Polk did not appoint him a Minnesota Territory judge, that territory not being established for some time, but he was hired as a clerk in the U.S. Treasury Department in 1848 and eventually became chief clerk of the Sixth Auditor's Office.

3. Sen. Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, introduced a bill to create "the Territory of Minesota" in January 1848. Though reported by the Committee on Territories in April and again in August, it did not come up for a vote before the session ended. Polk signed a bill creating Minnesota Territory on March 3, 1849, his last day as president. That territory, which existed until 1858, comprised previously unorganized territory west of the Mississippi River and, east of that

river, areas of the former Wisconsin Territory not included in the new state of Wisconsin. "An Act to establish the Territorial Government of Minnesota." *SL*, 30th Congress, 2nd Session, Chapter 121.

TO JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear Sir:

Washington City Feby. 1st 1848

I have received your letter of the 4th of January, and am gratified to learn that you are getting on so well with my business. Mr *J. T. Leigh* informs me that he has drawn a Bill on me in your favour for \$315.76, that being the balance due you, on the settlement of my accounts with you, including your wages for the last year.¹ The Bill will be paid, on being presented to me. I suppose some of the merchants who may need Eastern funds, will give you the money for it. I am pleased to learn that you have got *Harry* the blacksmith home. I wish you to write to me, as well as you can ascertain, what amount is due for his hire, for the last and preceeding years, and who are the debtors.² *Harry* can probably give you information on the subject. If you collect any of his hire, you can retain it, in your hands, and let it stand as a part of your wages for this year. I do not desire, that you should go to *Carrollton* for it, until you shall learn that it is collected and will certainly be paid. You can learn when it is collected by writing to *Carrollton*. I will direct my commission merchants, *Messrs Pickett Perkins & Co* of New Orleans, to forward to you at *Troy*, the Bill of cotton-bagging, rope, and other articles mentioned in your letter. I have in addition to the articles mentioned by you, directed them, to send a barrel of Molasses, and 3. dozen pair of negro shoes, most of them to be of large size.³ If they are not needed in the spring they will be ready for next winter. *Pickett Perkins & Co*, have advised me of the receipt at New Orleans of 100. bags of my cotton.⁴ I suppose the balance of the crop, has been shipped to them before this time. You must write me once every month, as I am always gratified to learn how my business is getting on. Write me how much land you have cleared since you have been on the place. I suppose you have cleared but little, if any this winter. After you are done cultivating the crop, next summer you can clear more. You must continue to give particular attention to the stock, so as to make it supply the place, with pork, &c. without buying, to have plenty of milk-cows, and work-oxen &c.

You have heretofore done well in this respect, as I have no doubt, you will continue to do so. Be sure, to pay my taxes, and preserve the receipts, so as to avoid any trouble on the subject, such as you had last year.⁵

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. When you pay the taxes, be sure that the Land is properly described in the receipts. When you pay, you had better shew the receipts to *Mr Leigh*, who will know whether they are right or not. I own the whole of the section of land on which the houses are, and the half section South of it, adjoining *Dr. Towns's*⁶ or *Mr Leigh's* land. I mention the land I own, that you may make no mistake in the payment of the taxes. J.K.P.

[P.S.] I will send you soon a list of the articles, which I may order to be sent to you by *Pickett & Co*, and may include in it some other articles, in addition to those you have mentioned. You can buy the iron which may be needed by the blacksmith, until you get, the iron which I will order from *New Orleans*. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Yalobusha County, Miss.

1. John T. Leigh's letter not found.
2. For some of the men who had hired Long Harry, see note in Polk to Robert Campbell, Jr., November 24, 1847.
3. Polk refers to a future order—Polk to Pickett, Perkins & Co., February 29, 1848—not one already placed.
4. Pickett, Perkins & Co. to Polk, January 17, 1848.
5. See letter and notes in Polk to Leigh, November 24, 1847.
6. A physician named Dr. Towns, in 1839–40, treated Polk's overseer, George W. Bratton, and several of Polk's slaves. He was likely James M. Towns (also spelled Townes) (c. 1808–1867), a Virginia-born Yalobusha County, Miss., planter.

FROM WILLIAM L. MARCY

Sir:

Washn. Feby 2d [1848]¹

I herewith send you the record &c. of the Proceedings of the Court Martial in the case of Lt. Col. Frémont.²

W. L. MARCY

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's diary: received February 2, 1848.

1. Year identified through content analysis.
2. Enclosures not found. The proceedings have been published as Mary Lee Spence and Donald Jackson, eds., *The Expeditions of John Charles Frémont*, vol. 2 suppl., *Proceedings of the Court-Martial* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1973). The court-martial judged Frémont guilty of all three charges—mutiny, disobeying an order, and conduct prejudicial to military discipline—and ordered his expulsion from the army. See also letter and notes in William Carey Jones to Polk, February 12, 1848.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear sir [Yalobusha County, Miss.]¹ February 4th 1848

I nough take the oppitunity of riting you a few lins concerning your Plantation and people. Youre people are all well at this time. We have finished the crop. We made 144 Bags of coten.² The corn is not mesuered say, 800 Barel on the rise. Slaughtered 65 head of polk hogs.³ We are nough preparing for a crop clearing land & repairing fencis & ploughing making the negros summer Clothing. Harry⁴ is at work in the shop. The boy fan is at work with him. Harry thinks him right apt To lern. I have not informed you that Harry had taken another wife⁵ in carrolton. Harry seams to be well satisfide has a willing mind and a great resulation to get along with his bisness.

The negros all git on vary well nough. The Boy Joe that Col Campbell⁶ Bought Ran a way Las yeare. I have a nise Lot of stock hogs. The stock all Lucks well. We wiell waunt another mule.

I sent you a bill for Iron.⁷ I think it wiell not be a noufe whene it comes if not I will git Mr Leigh⁸ to right for more as it is cheaper in new orleans than heare.

I have nothing more worth youre attention only Remane . . .

JOHN A MAIRS

ALS. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received February 16, 1848; "Weights of cotton-bags, and other matters relating to my private business on my plantation in Mississippi."

1. Place identified from postmark of Oakachickama, Miss.

2. Mairs enclosed a list of the weights of cotton bags numbered 121 to 144. The weights total 12,085 pounds, though Mairs erroneously gives the total as 12,087. He notes, "the fore Last Bags are youre servents coten All Marked in youre name"; those four bags total 2,095 pounds. AD. DLC-JKP.

3. Mairs probably either refers to hogs owned by Polk or meant to write "pork hogs."

4. Long Harry.

5. On Harry's second wife, see letter and notes in Robert Campbell, Jr., to Polk, September 14, 1847.

6. Robert Campbell, Jr.

7. Mairs to Polk, January 4, 1848.

8. John T. Leigh.

FROM ROBERT J. WALKER

Dear Sir

[Washington City, February 4, 1848]¹

I have been taken with a severe cold affecting my head and breast and eyes and rendering me entirely incapable of continuing the examination.² If possible I will resume it in the morning.

R J WALKER

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably delivered by courier. From Polk's AE: received February 4, 1848.

1. Place identified through content analysis; date identified through content analysis and from Polk's AE.

2. On March 31, 1847, Polk ordered the military to collect duties on goods imported into occupied Mexican ports. On February 1, 1848, the U.S. Senate resolved to ask Polk whether the duties were being charged on goods owned by U.S. citizens, what rates were being charged on them, how much money had been thus collected, and "by what authority of law the same have been levied and collected." On February 3 Polk, while preparing his response—which, he explains in his diary, "involved a question of public law which required examination"—consulted Walker and Nathan Clifford. Walker remained too ill to attend cabinet meetings until February 20, but Polk discussed a draft response with the rest of the cabinet on February 8, revised it on the ninth, and dated it and sent it to the Senate on the tenth. In that message Polk quotes his Third Annual Message to Congress on the orders of March 1847 and explains that the duties, which ultimately fall on Mexican consumers, help fund the U.S. war effort. They do apply to U.S. goods and ships; otherwise, he argues, "The whole commerce would have been conducted in American vessels, no contributions could have been collected, and the enemy would have been furnished with goods without the exaction from him of any contribution whatever." Polk points out that the duties are preferable for U.S. exporters over the blockade that preceded them and the higher Mexican duties before that. He further asserts, "No principle is better established than that a nation at war has the right of shifting the burden off itself and imposing it on the enemy by exacting military contributions. The mode of making such exactions must be left to the discretion of the conquerer" as long as it follows "the rules of civilized warfare." He cites documents accompanying his annual message for the rates, but notes that he has no record of the revenue from U.S. goods and ships alone. See the message in *CMPP*–4, pp. 570–72.

FROM NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE¹

Sir,

Salem, (Masstt) Febr'y 5th 1848

I understand that Mr F. H. Hall² is a candidate for the place of Assistant-Purser in the Navy; and as I have had the advantage of an acquaintance with this gentleman, of four years standing, I beg leave to bear my personal testimony to his merits. He appears to me to possess

qualifications such as are rarely met with, and which render him peculiarly fit for the office above-mentioned—a regular business-education, which has been perfected by a variety of experience; habits of order and method; a remarkable intelligence, and readiness in adapting himself to all modes of life and action—all combined with great firmness and energy of character, and a high sense of honor and integrity. Mr Hall's manners, and general cultivation and refinement, would be creditable to the service into which he desires to be introduced; and, should his application be successful, I am fully confident that he will do honor to the appointment.

NATHL HAWTHORNE

ALS. MdHi—HA. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Hawthorne (1804–64), born Nathaniel Hathorne, was a Democrat from Salem, Mass., who served as weigher and gauger in the Boston Customs House, 1839–41; surveyor of revenue for the port of Salem, 1846–49; and consul at Liverpool, England, 1853–57. In 1841 he lived at the Brook Farm utopian community in West Roxbury, Mass. By the time of this letter he had published *Fanshawe* (1828), *Twice Told Tales* (1837 and 1842), *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846), numerous stories in magazines, and pseudonymous children's books. He later wrote his most famous novels, including *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) and *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), as well as an 1852 campaign biography of Franklin Pierce, his friend since their shared student days at Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine.

2. Someone, possibly Hawthorne, wrote "H. F. Hall" above this name without striking out the original. The reference may be to Fitts (or Fitz) H. Hall (1827 or 1828–1900), of Southbridge, Mass. He did not receive an appointment in the navy but did, during the Civil War, serve as a private in the army's Fifty-first Massachusetts Infantry Regiment. The census of 1870 identifies him as a stonemason; the census of 1900 and a death record, as a farmer.

FROM ROBERT B. REYNOLDS

My dear Sir:

Vera Cruz, Febry 7. 1848

I take the liberty of once more addressing you. I shall soon leave for Puebla, this day being set for our departure, under command of Maj Caldwell¹ of the Voltigeurs.

Major Polk² was at Orizaba 8 days ago; he had previously entered that city, but has returned to Mexico.³ I had letters from him. He is in good health and from him I learn, that Pillow⁴ will triumph in the investigation to take place, over Genl. Scott and all the foul slanders perpetrated against him⁵ & you fully sustained for his appointment. I rejoice at this.

Mr Trist has injured your chance of making an honorable peace. He should not have manifested any anxiety for peace and then we should have had the advantage, but Scott is so anxious to smother "the fire in his rear,"⁶ that wants peace. I hope nothing less than the sierra madre for a boundary will be acceded to. I write in great haste and please pardon my taking this liberty with you.

Capt Elliott⁷ our former Assist quarter Master here, did good service. His successor Capt Masten,⁸ is doing very well. I hope he will be let alone here & not superseded. He can not be superseded by a more capable officer. A word from you to Gen Jessup⁹ will prevent his being superseded. I have seen some service & I know, when a man is qualified to do his duty & studies to retrench expenditures.

We are just leaving or I should write more, but I have written enough to interrupt you too much already. Your selection of a quarter master for New Orleans, Major Tompkins, a son of the old war horse,¹⁰ was first rate.

R B REYNOLDS

P.S. Capt Masten our quarter master at VaCruz is a good officer & I hope he may be retained at this place.

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City.

1. Kentucky lawyer and Democrat George A. Caldwell (1814–66) served in the state house, 1839–41, and the U.S. House, 1843–45 and 1849–51. He joined the army as a major and quartermaster in 1846; he became a major of infantry in March 1847 and of voltigeurs that April. Brevetted lieutenant colonel effective September 1847, he served until August 25, 1848.

2. William H. Polk.

3. Reference is to Mexico City.

4. Gideon J. Pillow.

5. Opening quotation mark missing; quotation is probably from a conversation with William H. Polk. The court of inquiry into Winfield Scott's charges against Gideon J. Pillow was held in Mexico City, March 16–April 21; Tepeyahualco, Mexico, April 28; New Orleans, May 8–9; Louisville, Ky., May 16; Frederick, Md., May 29–June 21; and Washington City, June 23–July 1, 1848. The court concluded that Pillow had inflated his own role in the Battle of Contreras—in an official report, a letter to Scott, and a narrative intended for the New Orleans *Delta*—but exonerated him otherwise and recommended against a court-martial. Polk, through William L. Marcy on July 7, approved the court's decision. For the proceedings and decisions, see Senate Executive Document No. 65, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 3–335. The court did not investigate charges against other officers. Polk's diary entry of April 18, 1848, reports that the War Department had learned, on April 17, that Scott had withdrawn his charges against James Duncan and that William J.

Worth had withdrawn his against Scott. Although Polk and his cabinet, on April 18, decided to have the court consider Scott's charges against Worth and Pillow's against Scott, in the end it considered neither.

6. On May 21, 1846, Scott wrote to Marcy of his fear, if the Whig general took command of the U.S. forces in Mexico, of not having the full "support of his government": of having "*a fire upon my rear from Washington, and the fire in front from the Mexicans.*" Newspapers, including the *Washington Daily National Intelligencer* of June 10, printed that letter. Especially after Polk gave Scott the chief command in November 1846, they—paraphrasing—repeatedly referenced the general's "fire in the rear" or, occasionally, "fire in his rear." Democratic newspapers revived the reference when Scott ran for president in 1852. For a similar phrase, see letter and notes in Andrew Lane to Polk, August 3, 1847.

7. Edward G. Elliott (?–1849), of the District of Columbia, joined the army as a lieutenant in 1838. He became a captain and assistant quartermaster in March 1847; though appointed a captain in the Fourth Infantry Regiment on January 1, 1848, he vacated his post the same day. He died while assistant quartermaster at Cruces, on the Isthmus of Panama.

8. New Yorker Frederick H. Masten (c. 1811–1874) joined the army as a lieutenant in 1838 and became a captain and assistant quartermaster in March 1847. He served until 1857.

9. Thomas S. Jesup.

10. Daniel D. Tompkins (1799–1863)—not to be confused with his uncle, fellow New Yorker Daniel D. Tompkins, who served as vice president under James Monroe—graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1820. He earned the brevet rank of major in 1836 and that permanent rank, as a quartermaster, in 1842. During the Mexican War he was posted at Cincinnati; Philadelphia; and, 1847–49, New Orleans. Brevetted lieutenant colonel effective May 1848, he eventually rose to the permanent rank of colonel. His father, Caleb Tompkins (1759–1846), served in the New York House, 1804–6; as a Westchester County, N.Y., judge, 1807–20 and 1823–46; and as a Democratic-Republican in the U.S. House, 1817–21.

FROM JANE MARIA ELIZA McMANUS STORMS¹

New York Feb 8th '48

Does your Excellency realize that this city is almost certain to be lost through the supin[en]less² of those who occupy its highest places through your favor and confidence? If greater energy is not shown for the future than has marked the past Democracy³ will mourn in '48 the repetition of the story of '40.⁴ Some of them pretend to say there is no danger—and certainly there need be none—but there *is* a great and imminent danger if they will not rise to make it harmless. I am addressing the chief of the democracy rather than the President and would not in either case intrude on your attention if the aspect of things were less alarming. Do not believe those who say New York *is* safe. It *can* be but it is not, nor are the means used to make it safe.

When the fall of Mexico⁵ was heard here Mr. Beach⁶ advised and urged the leaders to call meetings and enlist the people with music, speeches, banners and processions as sharers in the joy and glory of the conquest. No, they left the field open to the other side, who took care to occupy it with heart-stirring blazons of Palo Alto and Buena Vista. That the impulsive, courage-loving population of New York is not in an overwhelming majority for a hero-candidate,⁷ is in my sincere opinion more owing to the steady admonitions of the universal Sun⁸ than all other causes put together. With such an able, patriotic and clear-sighted head⁹ why does the Custum House slumber in such frozen apathy? Why does not that ready tactician, the surveyor of the Port¹⁰ marshal his forces? What is your P.M.¹¹ doing and where is Bogardus,¹² the ever ready? Where is the U.S. Const¹³ and the Navy?

When your message appeared the public sentiment was in that state of confidence and enthusiasm which adroit men seize upon to cast in a permanent mould. A few meetings, a little timely effort and the impulse would have radiated and rolled on with gathering strength until no military name would withstand its avalanche course. The decisive hour was again left unimproved and all the elements of victory abandoned to the enemy. It is doubtful whether we can regain the broad area thus given over to Taylor. Soldier fame is so dear to this people that our only hope lay in prevention—in a wise pre-occupation of the ground which the apathy of the leaders here has permitted to pass into adverse hands. Still victory is possible if democracy has the courage and energy to struggle for it—if they do not, *defeat is certain*. This city is well nigh lost and we all know how its position at the spring election¹⁴ influences the state in the great contest. It sets forth the course of the channell.

Do not be misled by those who say the city is safe. No man—no ten men—in the city has the certain means of tracing public opinion possessed by Mr. Beach; his troop of carriers are well-trained and intelligent and from the system of weekly payments to them for the paper they are brought every Monday in contact with the casting vote of the state. His hand rests continually on the public pulse and when he wishes to know its exact beat we have but to frame a simple inquiry to that end. *At this hour—(and it is the first time) New York would go for Taylor*. This is the fault of the U.S. empleados¹⁵ for they might have had it all their own way. Public sentiment was well prepared—hitherto we have kept this enthusiastic population at calm anti-military temperature and the latent heat could be readily struck out for better things it¹⁶ a strong blow was given.

“All of Mexico” is the deepest sentiment now, it is never alluded to in a popular assembly without eliciting the wildest applause. If a treaty is made on the line of Taylor’s victories and only the right of way across the Istmus of Tehuantepec *when Mexico opens it*, secured

to us, the fruits of the war remains with the Whigs. Worth¹⁷ and all of Mexico could, if there was no immediate peace, drive them from their strong position, provided always your people here would *act*, and act immediately.

The Wilmot Proviso never had any hold on the people here. It was a bye word and trick among the selfish and quarrelsome leaders but the masses never felt much interest in it. It would have taken much careful nursing to make it an issue in New York and the party claiming it would be defeated to a certainty.

J. M. STORMS

Too true

M Y BEACH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “*Private*” by Storms on the cover. From Polk’s AE: received February 1848.

1. Moses Y. Beach’s signed concurrence, which he wrote sideways across the first page of Storms’s letter, follows it here.

2. Letters inserted to complete probable meaning.

3. Democratic party.

4. In 1840 Whig William Henry Harrison, with 53 percent of the popular vote, defeated Democrat Martin Van Buren for the presidency in an electoral victory of 234 to 60. Harrison won New York.

5. Beyond rumors reported in newspapers, Americans were not yet aware of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which reached Washington City on February 19. Storms presumably refers to the fall of Mexico City, in September 1847.

6. Connecticut native Moses Y. Beach (1800–1868) began his career as an inventor and, in 1835–38, purchased the *Sun*, a pioneer publication, established in 1833, of New York City’s soon-thriving “penny press.” As a journalist, editor, and publisher, he developed far-flung contacts in the Democratic party. Polk, in January 1847, dispatched Beach—accompanied by Storms—to Mexico on a secret mission, ultimately unsuccessful, to negotiate an end to the Mexican War. During that same period, Beach, whose newspaper often promoted U.S. expansionism, participated in intrigues in Cuba and New York that sought to annex Cuba to the United States.

7. Reference is to army general and Whig presidential candidate Zachary Taylor.

8. New York *Sun*.

9. New York City customs collector Cornelius W. Lawrence.

10. A New York City Democrat, Elijah F. Purdy (1796–1866) served intermittently as acting mayor in the 1840s and, appointed by Polk, served as surveyor of revenue for the port of New York, 1845–49. He later became a powerful figure in Tammany Hall, a political machine that controlled Democratic politics in New York City after 1854.

11. New York City postmaster Robert H. Morris.

12. Cornelius S. Bogardus (c. 1812–1857), a merchant from Dutchess County, N.Y., and a Tammany Hall leader, served as assistant customs collector at New York City, 1844–47, and naval officer there, 1848–49. He was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention of 1848.

13. The USS *Constitution*, launched in 1797 and known as “Old Ironsides” since the War of 1812, most recently had circumnavigated the globe, 1844–46. After extensive repairs, the frigate became the flagship of the navy’s Mediterranean Squadron in the fall of 1848. Over the following decades it went into and out of commission; as of 2016 it is the oldest ship on the navy’s active list.

14. New York City held elections for mayor, aldermen, and other municipal officers on April 11, 1848.

15. Spanish for “employees.” Storms refers to federal officers in New York City.

16. Storms probably meant to write “if.”

17. William J. Worth.

TO ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Dear Sir:

Washington City Feby. 11th 1848

I have received your letter of the 22nd ultimo, in answer to the enquiries contained in mine to you of the 24th of November last. Your letter to *Mr Marrs*¹ will put him in possession of the facts in relation to *Harry’s*² *Hire* and I have no doubt all will be right. You enquire whether your son *Robert Bruce Campbell* can receive an appointment as a *Cadet* at the Military Academy at West Point.

In answer I have to state, that I can appoint him next year, and from my recollection of his age, *that* will be as soon as he ought to enter the institution. Many youths who enter the institution, at *sixteen* or *seventeen* years of age, fail to pass through the course of studies prescribed and after remaining a few months or a year are discharged. The age of *seventeen* or *eighteen* years is quite early enough, and even then they should be well prepared in the preliminary studies and those which are taught during the first year; otherwise they will be [in]³ danger of not standing appraisal examinations [. . .] and being discharged. I [send you herein the questions] and the course of studies.⁴ I advise you to put *Bruce* to school, and tell him during the present year, prepare himself [intelligibly] in the preliminary studies, and those which are taught during the first year. This will make it much easier for him and will, if he shall be studious, after entering the institution ensure his success. I give you this advice, because a very large number of the Cadets who have not made such preparations are discharged, to the great mortification of themselves and their parents. The course of studies at the

Academy is [rigorous, and . . .] education is [comprised, . . . who] are fortunate enough to pass through the course of studies prescribed. Tell *Bruce* to go to studying [and] prepare himself, and that I will appoint him, [. . .] this time. When he joins the Academy I wish him to be so well prepared, as to be able to do honour to himself. Were he to enter at his early age and without such preparation, he could not do this.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Since writing the above, I have received your letter of the 2nd Inst. informing me that *Mr Evan Young* had made the first payment of \$2000.— for my house and lot, to *Mr V. K. Stevenson*⁵ of Nashville. You request the loan of that sum until the 1st of Jany. next, if I have no use for it. Since I wrote to *Mr Young* on the subject,⁶ I learned that my house at Nashville had been so much injured by the explosion of the powder magazine, as to require more extensive repairs than I had anticipated. In consequence of this, the contract for repairs & improvements has been changed, and I have contracted to pay, a part of the money in the spring. The money paid to *Stevenson* by *Mr Young* will be applied in this way. It would give me pleasure to accommodate you if I could, but it will not be in my power. I have forgotten when the notes which you hold on *Mr McCrady*⁷ will fall due, having mislaid your letter giving me an account of the sale,⁸ but have an impression that they will be due soon. Will you inform me on this point, and also what the prospect of collecting them may be. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Columbia, Tenn.

1. John A. Mairs.
2. Long Harry.
3. Word or words here and below uncertain or illegible, light and blurred ink transfer.
4. Enclosures not found.
5. Vernon K. Stevenson.
6. Polk to Young, December 1, 1847.
7. Ephraim W. McRady.
8. Campbell to Polk, August 27, 1846.

FROM RALPH I. INGERSOLL¹

My dear Sir

Legation of the United states
St. Petersburg 11" Feby 1848

I have, by the mail that takes this, addressed a despatch to the Secretary of state, requesting my recall, to take effect at any time after the first of June next.² I find that the situation of my family in the

United states, is such, & such the condition of my wifes³ constitution, that it would be unsafe for her to undertake to cross the Atlantic, and come up the Baltic, to join me here, as we anticipated she would do when I left home. This circumstance determines me to close my mission, early in the ensuing summer, with your consent, which I have asked through the secretary of state. I prefer leaving the beginning of summer rather than towards its close, for two reasons: first, that during the summer months there is nothing for a diplomat to do, the Emperor⁴ being generally absent at that season, & the members of the Diplomatic corps being then generally dispersed on different excursions. I should therefore by remaining, be drawing salary, without rendering any equivalent service, which I prefer to avoid; and secondly, my health suffered so severely, and so long, after my arrival in Europe, from the effects of the rough passage that I made over the Atlantic in the fall of 1846, that I am exceedingly desirous to avoid if possible, an autumnal passage on my return. Nor can there be any inconvenience in my closing my mission in June, on account of the non-arrival of a successor, for there is no important question pending, or likely to be pending, between the two countries making the presence of a minister necessary, and the archives of the Legation can without injury to the public service, be transferred in the usual manner to the temporary charge of my Secretary,⁵ either acting, or actual, as may then be the case, who would see to their safe transfer to the new minister. My retiring from the mission, should you be disposed to nominate my acting secretary for the permanent appointment of Secretary of Legation, would obviate the existing delicacy in reference to his selection, though I would much prefer his appointment as secretary to some other European Legation, on account of the severity of the climate here. But that whole subject I leave entirely at your unbiassed disposal, and shall cheerfully acquiesce, in any disposition of it, that may seem to you best. I will however but repeat, what I have before said, that he is particularly well qualified for the post of Secretary, to either of our Legations, being now well versed in the knowledge of French, speaking & writing the language with ease, with the additional advantage of considerable experience in the Diplomatic line.

I have felt it due to the public service, as well as to yourself personally, to apprise you early of my intended return to the United States, that you may not be hurried in selecting my successor, and that the person so selected may have sufficient time after his appointment, to make the necessary arrangements for leaving, and to avail himself of the comparatively short season in which the Baltic can be conveniently navigated. It will be a great convenience to me if you will instruct the Secretary of state to inform me as early as possible, of your decision on

the request that I make for my recall, as it will take considerable time afterwards, for me to break up my establishment and dispose of my effects if I leave, and besides, I am desirous of knowing what my movements are to be at the earliest practicable period, on account of the lease of my house, which must be determined on soon. I cannot leave this subject without re-iterating to you the deep sense of gratitude which I feel for the unexpected honor that you conferred on me, and my native state, in selecting me for this mission, and to assure you that it will be one of the last events with which my life has been connected, that I can forget, or fail duly to appreciate.

Leaving this subject I cannot close without a few words in reference to our, and your, position regarding Mexico. If there has been any one subject, on which I have felt more national pride, than on others, and which I have viewed with the most satisfaction, within the range of our foreign relations, it is the decided, manly, and statesman-like course that you have taken since hostilities were forced upon us. The late message, as well as the one of Decr 1846⁶ have done you great honor. You have placed the right of our course on impregnable ground, and much as the opposition may scold, your positions cannot be shaken. The exposition was particularly desirable on this side of the Atlantic where much pains had been taken to mystify, and misrepresent, our country and its cause. The manner of conducting the war, after having been forced into it by Mexico, that is, seizing upon the strong holds of the enemy, breaking up his depots, turning the guns of his castles against him, in short making him feel that it was no parade day affair, was the only practicable way of bringing it to a close within any reasonable time. Had you merely acted on the defensive—permitted the Mexicans to select their own means, manner, time, and points, of attack, with the advantage of retiring in serenity to recruit, drill, and re-inforce, within the protection of an imaginary line, unmolested after every repulse, your policy would have been construed into pusillanimity, and the enemy would have drawn into their service much of the first military talent of Europe before the contest could close. The sympathies of Europe “feigned or felt”⁷ were notoriously with our enemies, not that the sympathizers loved our enemies more than ourselves, but they looked with jealousy if not alarm, at our progress, and the silent and successful working, of our republican system. The contest would thus have been ten fold more troublesome to us, than it has been, or can be hereafter. Again, this same European sympathy would have found indirect means to encourage the privateering and sea marauding system, with which Mexico intended to annoy us, commissions for which were advertised for sale in London,

and hawked about the shores of the Mediterranean. Such commissions would in my opinion have been accepted, and turned against our commerce in every sea, but it was seen, from the vigor of our onset, and the rapidity with which our blows were followed up, upon the strong holds of the enemy, wherever they could be reached, that we might become, to use a Yankee-ism "an ugly customer"⁸ to any foreign power that should wink at the iniquitous arrangement, as well as to those who might be more immediate actors in it. The way we carried on the war nipped that iniquity in the right time. It may be asked why did not this sympathy manifest itself for Mexico, when she was striving to subdue Texas? That was a very different affair: the dismembering one republic (so called) Mexico, without adding to another. It was looked upon more as an indication of the breaking up of the existing governments on our continent, than in any other light, to be followed perhaps eventually by secessions from our own confederacy. But when the question came to be viewed, as the annexation of Texas to the United states, and consequently adding to the strength of the self governed People, whose example is most conspicuous to other governments, the sensibilities on this side, were all awakened in favor of Mexico.

Such are the opinions I have formed on looking over the whole surface from the point on which I am placed, and with an eye as impartial as that of an American can be in such a survey: and when I have seen so much pains taken to divide and mislead public opinion at home, I have felt and still feel, a strong desire to be again battling in the political ranks as a private citizen on my own soil, where I believe I can be of more service to my country and the just administration of its government, than in any official position on this side of the Atlantic. The disturbing movement that I have most regretted to see, was that which took place last fall, in the state of New York, and which was the occasion of the extraordinary speech of Mr John Van Buren at Herkimer,⁹ the effect, if not the object, of which, was, to throw that powerful state into the hands of the whigs. But most of all I regretted it, because a Van Buren¹⁰ movement of that kind, happening so nearly in time, and harmonizing in some respects in sentiment, with the Clay movement in Kentucky¹¹ (both conciliating, if not courting the abolitionists) tended to make the impression abroad, however unfounded, that the two gentlemen most disappointed in the last presidential election, or their immediate friends, have had some understanding, to prevent a like disappointment next time. I owe it to frankness however to say, that such is not my opinion! I do not believe that there has been, or will be, any such concert, but on the contrary my belief is, that the second sober thought

in New York, will put all things there, again right. I am however wearying you with a long letter—much too long—and will hurry to its close, with the renewed assurances that I remain . . .

R. I. INGERSOLL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked “(Private).” From Polk’s AE: received March 20, 1848.

1. Ralph I. Ingersoll (1789–1872), a lawyer from New Haven, Conn., served in the Connecticut House, 1820–25; in the U.S. House, 1825–33; and as minister to Russia, 1846–48. Though early on an Anti-Jacksonian, he supported President Jackson by the end of his career in Congress.

2. Ingersoll’s dispatch no. 8 to James Buchanan was dated February 11, 1848. LS, duplicate, in Colin M. Ingersoll’s hand. DNA–RG 59.

3. Margaret Catherine Eleanor Van den Heuvel Ingersoll (c. 1788–1878) was a daughter of Holland native John C. Van den Heuvel. Born in the Dutch colony of Demerara, in today’s Guyana, where her father had become a planter and the governor, she moved with her family to New York City as a young child. She married Ralph I. Ingersoll in 1814.

4. Nicholas I (1796–1855) reigned as Emperor, or Czar, of Russia, 1825–55.

5. New Haven lawyer Colin M. Ingersoll (1819–1903), Ralph and Margaret’s son, was appointed secretary of legation at St. Petersburg by Polk in 1847—an acting appointment until June 15, 1848—and was acting chargé d’affaires, September–November 1848. Recalled in 1849, he represented a Connecticut district as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1851–55.

6. Ingersoll refers to Polk’s Third and Second Annual Messages to Congress.

7. Paraphrase of Oliver Goldsmith’s poem “Edwin and Angelina” or “The Hermit” (1765), included in his *Vicar of Wakefield* (1766): “To win me from his tender arms,/Unnumber’d suitors came;/Who prais’d me for imputed charms,/And felt or feign’d a flame.”

8. Use of this term for a difficult person or foe goes back at least to the beginning of the nineteenth century.

9. John Van Buren (1810–66), son of Martin Van Buren—and known as “Prince John”—was born in Hudson, N.Y., and became an Albany lawyer before serving as an attaché to the legation at London, 1831–32, and as New York attorney general, 1845–46. Like his father, John was a leader of the Barnburner faction of New York’s Democratic party. At the Barnburner convention at Herkimer on October 26, 1847, John gave a speech in which he announced that he would not vote for the candidates nominated by Old Hunkers at the Democratic state convention in Syracuse: “I shall choose my own candidates, I shall vote my own ticket.”

10. Martin Van Buren.

11. In October 1847 Leslie Combs and five other Lexington, Ky., Whigs distributed a “*confidential*” circular to fellow party members. In it they minimize the popularity of nonpartisan meetings in Kentucky supporting Zachary Taylor for the presidency, though they opine that he would win Kentucky if

nominated by the Whig party. They then urge Henry Clay as a Whig candidate. They assert that most Kentucky Whigs “remain firm and unshaken in their attachment to him” and that even many Democrats would vote for him. Clay, they add, would accept the nomination only “under such a concurrence of weighty circumstances, (such, for example, as a decided manifestation of the wishes of a majority of the nation . . .) . . . that it was a matter of duty on his part to accept.” On November 15, two days after Clay’s speech at Lexington in opposition to the Mexican War, the Cincinnati *Enquirer* published the circular; other newspapers followed.

FROM WILLIAM McDANIEL¹

Sir

Palmyra Missouri 11th February 1848

I have taken the Liberty to adress you upon the Subject of the next presidency. I am Confident that, you would be the first Choices in the State of Mo, and I am a member of the Convention, that is to meet, Shortley in our State,² and if you will permit your friends to bring forward your name, I Should be gratified to be—informed on the Subject, prior to the tenth or fifteenth, of March, at which time I Expect to leave Home for the *Convention*.

You will sea that my object is to Bring, your name before the Convention, if permitted to so, will you be so good as to *answer this, in the most strict Confidence if Desired*.

Permit me to make you my thanks for the firmness, with which you have met the former foe, and a have all for the manner that you met the Domestic Enemy of our Glorious Country. Believe me my Dr Sir to be . . .

WM McDANIEL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City; marked “*in Confidence*” to the left of the signature. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: received March 3, 1848; “Private & confidential.”

1. McDaniel (1801–66), known as “Billy Mac the Buster,” was born in Kentucky and became a Palmyra, Mo., bank president and land claim agent. A Democrat, he served in the Missouri Senate, 1836–41; in the Second Seminole War; and in the U.S. House, 1846–47. He went to California with the gold rush in 1849–50.

2. The Missouri Democratic State Convention, held in Jefferson City on March 27, 1848, nominated candidates for governor and lieutenant governor, as well as a slate of delegates to the Democratic National Convention who supported U.S. Supreme Court associate justice Levi Woodbury for the presidency.

FROM WILLIAM CAREY JONES

[Washington City] Saturday, Feb. 12. [1848]¹

Wm. Carey Jones respectfully requests to lay before the President some papers connected with the proceeding of the Court Martial in the case of Lt. Col. Frémont.² Mr. J. will not occupy the time of the President more than five minutes.

[WILLIAM CAREY JONES]

AN. DLC—JKP. Addressed "To the President." From Polk's AE: received February 12, 1848; "Saw Mr Jones & he handed to me, certain papers, in relation to *Liut. Col. Fremont*."

1. Place and year identified through content analysis.

2. John C. Frémont. Enclosures not found; see also letter and notes in William L. Marcy to Polk, February 2, 1848. Polk does not mention these papers or his meeting with Jones in his diary entry of February 12, but he does discuss that day's cabinet meeting about Frémont's court-martial. All cabinet members present recommended that Polk, even if he approved Frémont's conviction, should remit the court's sentence expelling the officer from the army. After discussing the topic again in a rare Sunday cabinet meeting on February 13, Polk agreed with Frémont's guilt on two counts but not on that of mutiny. He thus decided to approve the conviction but remit the sentence. He submitted his decision on February 15. See, however, letter and notes in Archibald Campbell to Polk, February 19, 1848.

TO VERNON K. STEVENSON

My Dear Sir:

Washington City Feby. 12th 1848

I regret to trouble you so much about my private business, but as you were so kind as to agree to give it some attention I am under the necessity of writing you again. I wrote to you near a month ago concerning the title to the *Grundy*¹ property which I bought, and especially to the avenue of 50-feet which leads from church street to the building,² but have received no answer. About the same time I wrote to *Gov. Brown* and to *Mr Bass* on the subject.³ *Judge Catron* who aided *Gov. Brown* in making the contract, is clear & distinct in his recollection that the *avenue* was as much a part of the property bought, and sold, as the House itself.⁴ *Mr Andrew Ewing*⁵ was here about a week ago. He informed me that he filed the Bill in the chancery Court for the sale of the property, and that *all* the property which *Mr Grundy* owned at his death, was included. He expressed surprise that *Mr Bass* had interposed any difficulty about the avenue, and expressed the opinion that when he saw *Mr Bass*, he could satisfy him he was wrong. I hope you may be enabled

to satisfy *Mr Bass*, and have the title made. Neither *Gov. Brown* or *Mr Bass* have answered my letters.

Mr Hughes and *Mr Smith*⁶ of Nashville, with whom you made the contract for improvements and repairs, in October, were here a few days ago. They brought letters from *Dr. Waters* and *Mr James Irwin*, both of whom state that they have examined the House, and find it so much injured, that they advise me, to build a new one, instead of repairing the old one.⁷ *Messrs Hughes & Smith* submitted to me, the drawing of a plan for a new house, with its estimated cost, which exceeds the Bill for repairs according to your contract with them by the sum of \$2125. as you will see from the enclosed paper which they left with me.⁸ They did not leave the drawing, but a rough sketch of it in pencil which I enclose to you.⁹ *Mrs. Polk* was much better pleased with the plan of the new house than the old one. Finally I agreed to give them \$10,000. for a new house and all the improvements on the lot, such as they described verbally, (for their written Bill does not contain a full description) provided they would take, a brick store-house which I own in Columbia in part pay, either at \$1750. or at valuation. To this they assented, and the whole agreement was understood, and that it was to be reduced to writing by yourself on my behalf, and them, on their return to Nashville. I find it difficult to describe all that the contract is to include, further than to state that the whole building is to be new, except the wing-part of it fronting, the street on which *Dr. Newnan's*¹⁰ old House stands, and that is to be thoroughly repaired painted &c.—the materials and workmanship to be of the best kind; the wash and servants' house in the yard, to be rebuilt, the stable and carriage-house to be rebuilt, the latter to be enlarged, so as to hold two carriages or a carriage & a buggy. They are to dig another cellar room under the main-building, in addition to the one that is already there. The first floor of the House is to be elevated above the surface of the ground as high,¹¹ as the present House is. The front of the main-building towards church street, is to be 60. feet, and to run back 52. feet; the columns to run up the whole height of the building. There is to be an entrance also from *vine* street, I believe it is called, on which the old *Newnan* house stands, with a portico and pillars. The pitch of the rooms, below stairs and above is to be 15. feet. On entering from church street, as you will see from the rough plan enclosed, you first enter an open hall with two pillars; a passage leads through to the back-part of the House, and a cross-passage to the entrance from vine street of 10. feet. In this passage the stairs are to be. The parlours with a sliding door between them, are to be on the left of Hall as you enter from church street, and when thrown together will be 50 feet long from North to South, by 20 or 22 feet wide. A single parlour will be on the

right of the Hall, which I may occupy, as an office or sitting room. The dining room with folding doors, will be North of the passage in which the stairs are. Above stairs, there are to be 6. chambers, conveniently arranged, all of them with fire-places, except the one immediately over the Hall. The passages above stairs will be so arranged as to make the chambers convenient of access. All these will belong to the new building, independent of the wing, except, that, one room of the wing, which now *adjoins* the old house, will form part of the new one. The mouth-pieces in the two parlours to be of white marble. The plastering below stairs, *in* the rooms, to be prepared for papering, they to put the paper on but I to furnish it. The passages, below stairs, not to be papered, and the whole upstairs, to be white-coated and complete. Bells to be hung at the front doors. The painting all to be done, by them; the roof of all the building, including the wing to be of tin, which is to be painted. They are also to furnish & put up an iron-railing and gate, at the entrance, of the yard to the House from church Street with a stone foundation. The whole premises to be enclosed with a fence & painted according to your contract with them. In a word, the whole building, of the dimensions stated, is to be completed, by them, they finding all materials; and all the fencing, and improvements on the lot, to be made by them, all to be finished by the first of January next, for \$10,000. It was expressly stipulated that, as there were many improvements and conveniences which could not be specified, they were to make them all, under your directions without any additional or extra charges. If in the progress of the work you discover any addition or improvement proper to be made, you have a right to direct it, and they are to do the work, so as to make the establishment a complete one, without extra charge for it. They of course will be entitled to the materials of the old house, whic[h]¹² they will pull down. The payments which I agreed to make are as follows, viz—\$3.000— on 1st of May; \$3.000. on 1st of October; Brick-store-house in Columbia at valuation, you to select one person and they another to ascertain its value; and the balance when the work is done. When you come to select a person to appraise the store-house at Columbia, you can write either to my brother-in-law *James Walker* or to *Col. Robert Campbell*,¹³ to furnish you the name of a proper person. I request that you will enter into a written contract with *Messrs Hughes & Smith* upon the terms stated; leaving it to you to specify any other particulars which you may deem necessary. I learn from *Col. Campbell* of Columbia that *Mr Evan Young* has paid to you, \$2.000. of the amt. he owned¹⁴ me. This sum may be a part of the first payment, which is to be made on the 1st of May. You can pay it to them at once, if you deem it safe to do so, and they will deduct the intrest until the 1st of May. I will direct *Majr. McNeal*¹⁵ of Bolivar to remit to you what he has collected, which will be the greater part

of the balance of the first payment, and for the remainder whatever it may be you can draw on me, on the 1st of May. You may think it strange that in the midst of my public engagements, I can find time to write you, so long a letter about my private affairs, but you will remember that being a man of business habits, I can always find time to do, whatever is necessary to be done, and certainly nothing is more necessary, than to provide for my comfort in my retirement, and when I shall be in my declining years. I hope to have it in my power some day, to reciprocate, the favor you may confer, by giving to the business your kind attention.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. There is to be a back porch, extending to the kitchen & smoke house. There is also to be a store-room and china closet, located at some convenient place. *Mrs. Polk* thinks there should be 3. rooms for servants. J.K.P.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville. Included in contract between Stevenson and James M. Hughes, April 22, 1848. ADS. DLC–JKP. See also ALS, press copy, of this letter. DLC–JKP.

1. Felix Grundy.

2. Polk to Stevenson, January 13, 1848.

3. Polk to Aaron V. Brown, January 15, 1848; Polk to John M. Bass, January 17, 1848.

4. Polk may refer to a conversation of February 6, 1848, when, according to Polk's diary, he dined with John Catron.

5. Ewing (1813–64), a Nashville lawyer and slaveholder, served as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1849–51.

6. James M. Hughes and George W. Smith. Smith (1805–97), Hughes's partner in the Nashville carpentry shop of Hughes & Smith (or Smith & Hughes), was a Virginia-born carpenter. In 1846 the Tennessee legislature appointed him a commissioner to contract for the erection of a statue of Andrew Jackson in the Memphis area. He announced but then withdrew his candidacy for the Nashville city council in 1835; he did serve on that body in the 1870s.

7. John Waters to Polk, January 18, 1848; James Erwin to Hughes, January 17, 1848. ALsS. DLC–JKP. Waters (1794–1867), a Maryland-born Nashville physician, specialized in midwifery and the care of women and children. Elected a Nashville alderman in 1838, he served, at times, as a director of the Franklin Turnpike Company, Union Bank of Tennessee, and Bank of Tennessee. He was corresponding secretary of the Medical Society of Tennessee, 1840–42. Erwin (1788–1861), a Nashville merchant and Whig, was a son-in-law of Henry Clay and a brother-in-law of John Bell. He served as a Nashville alderman, 1824 and 1831; briefly owned the Nashville *Whig*, 1826; and was, at times, a bank director and railroad founding commissioner. In the 1830s he was sued for defaulting on debt to the federal government.

8. Enclosure not found.

9. The enclosed “sketch” was probably the drawing that Stevenson included, along with this letter from Polk, in his contract with Hughes of April 22, 1848, for Hughes to build Polk’s house. That drawing of the floor plan, whether drawn by Hughes and Smith or by Polk, includes labels in Polk’s hand. AD. DLC–JKP.

10. John Newnan (?–1838) began practicing medicine in Nashville around 1810 and had acquired a nearby plantation by 1813. In 1825, 579 acres of his land, plus his house and lot in Nashville, were sold at sheriff’s sale. In 1828 he supported John Quincy Adams over Andrew Jackson for the presidency. Sources, possibly confusing him with another physician of the same name, disagree over whether he was born and educated in Scotland or born in North Carolina, c. 1770, and trained in medicine in Philadelphia.

11. Polk probably meant to place “as high,” which he inserted with a caret, after the comma.

12. Letter cut off side of copy.

13. Robert Campbell, Jr.

14. Polk either meant to write “owed” or employed the now-obsolete usage of “own” as a synonym of “owe.” He refers to Campbell to Polk, February 2, 1848.

15. Ezekiel P. McNeal.

FROM ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL¹

Sir,

War Dept. Feb. 19. 48

By direction of the Secretary of War² I herewith enclose the resignation of Lt. Col. Fremont,³ just received at the Dept.

A. CAMPBELL

ALS. DNA–RG 94. Probably addressed locally. From Polk’s AEI: “The Secretary of War will accept, *Liut. Col. Fremont’s* Resignation March 14th 1848. J.K.P.”

1. Campbell (1813–87) was chief clerk of the War Department, 1846–49 and 1853–57. An 1835 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy who resigned from the army in 1836, this New York native worked as an engineer on railroad and canal surveys and on federal projects including a survey of the Cherokee’s land prior to their removal. He became William L. Marcy’s private secretary in 1845 and was a War Department clerk until 1857, when he became a commissioner, under the Buchanan-Pakenham Treaty, to establish the border between the United States and British North America.

2. William L. Marcy.

3. Campbell enclosed John C. Frémont to Roger Jones, February 19, 1848. Frémont acknowledges receipt of General Orders, No. 7, dated February 17, announcing the decision of his court-martial. He resigns his army commission, explaining “that I do not feel conscious of having done any thing to merit the finding of the court; and this being the case, I cannot, by accepting the clemency of the President, admit the justice of the decision against me.” ALS. DNA–RG 94. From Jones’s AES to Frémont’s letter: received February 19, 1848; “Laid

before the Sec. of War." From Marcy's AES and his two AEs to Frémont's letter: "Accepted by order of the President, 15th Mar. '48. W. L. Marcy"; answered March 15, 1848; "Returned from War Dept. Mch. 15, 1848."

FROM JACOB GOULD¹

Sir,

Rochester N.Y. Feby. 19. 1848

I have just returned from the State Convention at Utica, of which I spoke to you when I had the honor last to see you. Its proceedings, under the circumstances, were of a character to encourage the hope that the State may yet be saved and give its vote for the Baltimore nominees.² I had one leading object in going to the Convention and that was to put the Democracy of our State, both Parties,³ in a position that *they could support* the Baltimore Ticket, knowing as I did, that Preston King of St Lawrence, Rathbun of Cayuga⁴ Members of the late congress were to be there, with many others of equal and some of superior talents. I felt doubtful of success, but I was disappointed, agreeably so, found all disposed to soften and as far as they could, to give way, that success, might again crown the labors of the Democratic party. The resolutions on the subject of Slavery were followed by one, saying, they did [not] intend to make it a *National test* to divide the Democracy of the Union into sections, this being the case, the resolutions on that subject become more local, and as such, I hope, our friends at the south will regard them.⁵ The Convention was very full and represented, I have no doubt more than *three quarters* of the Democratic party of our State, this will be shown, should ever a separate vote (which God forbid shall ever be the case) be taken between the two sections of our party. If our delegates appointed as they have been, according to the usages of the party in our state heretofore, shall be received at the Baltimore Convention, I see no reason why the Democratic party of our State, will not go to the polls in harmony and if they do, success is certain.

I regret the course taken by a few controlling spirits at Albany. They had no occasion to call a State Convention until after the one just closed had met—they should not, when met, have put every obstacle possible in the way of reconciliation.⁶ In our part of the State not one in ten of our party favor that section of the party represented at Albany—that was strictly a section, while at Utica, the Convention was called by both sections and of course attended as such and by *some belonging to neither*. If the two papers at Albany⁷ could be united or struck out of existence, a short time would heal our troubles and again place us in the majority. The Convention, made no nomination nor presented any Candidate for President or Vice Prest. to satisfy some in different

portions of the State—some complimentary resolutions for Col. Benton Mr. Dix⁸ and Genl. Taylor were passed; I was quite astonished to find some Democrats at the Convention in favor of Genl. Taylor's being, at once, nominated, it was eased off, by the resolution referred to and no discussion had in convention on the subject. I will not annoy you with our local difficulties. I regret thir existence and whenever and wherever I have opportunity try to remove or heal them.

J. GOULD

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Gould (1794–1867), born in Massachusetts, settled in Rochester, N.Y., in the 1810s. A former schoolteacher, he became a shoe manufacturer and, in 1836, president of the Rochester City Bank. A Democrat, he served as Rochester mayor, 1835–36; collector of the port of Genesee, 1829–41; and U.S. marshal for the Northern District of New York, 1845–49.

2. New York Democrats dominated by the state party's Barnburner faction held a convention at Utica on February 16–17, 1848. Gould was a delegate and a member of the resolutions committee. The convention appointed a slate of delegates to the Democratic National Convention but did not direct them to support particular presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The Old Hunker faction of the party, at its convention at Albany on January 26–27, had directed individual congressional districts to select delegates to the Baltimore convention. New York's Democrats thus produced two competing slates of delegates. Polk's diary does not mention a meeting with Gould.

3. Gould refers to the Barnburners and Old Hunkers, not the Democrats and Whigs.

4. Preston King, of St. Lawrence County, and George O. Rathbun, of Cayuga County, N.Y., both Wilmot Proviso supporters and Barnburner leaders. King (1806–65), a lawyer, founded the St. Lawrence *Republican*, 1830, and served in the New York House, 1835–38. He served in the U.S. House as a Democrat, 1843–47, and as a Free Soiler, 1849–53, and in the U.S. Senate as a Republican, 1857–63. Rathbun (1803–70), also a lawyer, served in the U.S. House as a Democrat, 1843–47.

5. Bracketed word inserted to complete probable meaning. After resolving against "the extension of slavery into territory now free" and calling for Congress's exclusion of slavery from California and New Mexico Territories, the convention resolved that "they have not now, nor have they ever had, any desire to prescribe a test in the Presidential canvass which might prevent the union of all who sustain the general principles of the democratic creed; and that they deeply regret that any of their Southern brethren should have unwisely laid down a platform inconsistent with that union and inevitably tending to break up a national party into sectional divisions." *The Utica Convention. Voice of New-York!! Proceedings of the Utica Convention, February 16, 1848, with the Speeches of John Van Buren, George Rathbun, &c.*, Albany Atlas—Extra, February 1848, p. 17.

6. Although the Utica convention met after the Albany one, it was called first. A group of Democratic legislators called the Utica convention on November 18, 1847; the Democratic State Central Committee called the Albany convention in December. The obstacles to which Gould refers included the Albany convention's main address, prepared by a committee, which attacked the Barnburners at length, and its resolutions (1) "That the proposed Utica Convention is factious in its organization and its objects" and that the Democratic National Convention should not admit any delegates that it appoints, (2) condemning the Barnburners' convention at Herkimer the previous October, and (3) rejecting the Wilmot Proviso. *New-York Democratic State Convention, Held at the Capitol, January 26 and 27, 1848. Proceedings, Address, Resolutions & Speeches. And the Democratic State Electoral Ticket, Pledged to the Nominees of the National Democratic Convention, Albany Argus—Extra, 1848, pp. 5–11, 16.*

7. Albany's two Democratic newspapers were the *Argus*, founded in 1813 and at this time edited by Old Hunker leader Edwin Crosswell and his cousin Sherman Crosswell, and the *Atlas*, founded in 1840 and now a Barnburner paper edited by William Cassidy and Henry H. Van Dyck.

8. Thomas H. Benton and John A. Dix. Dix (1797–1879), a soldier, lawyer, and railroad president, served as adjutant general of New York, 1831–33; in the New York House, 1842; and as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate, 1845–49. A Barnburner, he ran unsuccessfully later in 1848 as the gubernatorial candidate of the Free Soil party. He later became secretary of the Treasury under President Buchanan, 1861; a Union general in the Civil War, 1861–65; and New York governor, 1873–74.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

[Washington City]

Dear Sir/

Monday Morning [February 21, 1848]¹

The bearer hereof, Mr. Freamer, will be happy to see you & give you all the information he possesses at any time which may suit your convenience.²

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Delivered by James L. Freamer. From Polk's AE: received February 21, 1848.

1. Place and date identified through content analysis.

2. James L. Freamer, as a bearer of dispatches from Mexico, arrived in Washington City with the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and dispatches from Winfield Scott on the evening of February 19, 1848. Buchanan promptly brought the documents to Polk, who discussed the treaty with his cabinet the next two days. Freamer, after delivering this letter to the president, met with him again the evening of February 24 and left for Mexico the same evening with William L. Marcy's dispatch of that date to William O. Butler; see letter and notes in Polk to Marcy, February 25, 1848.

FROM CHESTER ASHLEY AND JOHN A. ROCKWELL¹
TO JAMES K. AND SARAH CHILDRESS POLK

[Washington City]² Feby 22d 1848

The Undersigned Committe[e]³ on behalf of the Managers of the Birth Night Ball⁴ would respectfully inform the President & Mrs. Polk that in consequence of the severe & probably fatal indisposition of the late President Mr. Adams,⁵ the contemplated Ball has been deferred to a future period. We have the honor to be

CHESTER ASHLEY
JOHN A. ROCKWELL

ANS. DLC—JKP. Probably delivered by Rockwell to James K. Polk on February 22, 1848.

1. Letter written by Ashley and signed by both. Born in Massachusetts and raised in New York, Ashley (1790–1848) practiced law in Illinois before moving to Little Rock, Ark. Terr., in 1820. He represented the state of Arkansas as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate from 1844 until his death. Rockwell (1803–61), a Norwich, Conn., lawyer, served in the state senate, 1838–39; became a New London County Court judge in 1840; and served as a Whig in the U.S. House, 1845–49.

2. Place identified through content analysis and from Polk's diary.

3. Letter cut off side of page.

4. This ball, to which the president accepted Ashley and Rockwell's verbal invitation on February 19, 1848, was held each February 22 to celebrate George Washington's birthday. Owing to John Quincy Adams's illness, according to Polk's diary entry of February 22, the president decided not to attend before he received this letter.

5. John Quincy Adams (1767–1848), a son of Pres. John Adams, served in various diplomatic posts; in the U.S. Senate, 1803–8; and as secretary of state under Pres. James Monroe, 1817–25, before becoming president, 1825–29. After his defeat for reelection by Andrew Jackson, he served in the U.S. House from 1831 until his death. Adams belonged to the Federalist party early in his public career; he became a Whig in 1834. For Polk, Adams proved an implacable adversary, opposing the annexation of Texas as well as the spread of slavery. He suffered a stroke during a House debate on February 21, 1848, and died in the U.S. Capitol two days later.

FROM ANDREW J. DONELSON

Dr. Sir,

Berlin. Feby. 22d 1848

It is not until to day that the *Unions* have been received containing your annual message, and the reports of the Secretaries.¹ I had been compelled before to rely on the extracts from them given in the British

press. In the eyes of Europe our military operations are studied with most interest. They satisfy it that we have not degenerated from the standard of our Fathers; but it is not likely that Monarchs will ever admit the inference we have so often drawn in favor of our system to the prejudice of theirs.

You have a stormy session of Congress before you, and it looks to me that the prospect is almost hopeless of uniting the Democrats in time for the Presidential campaign. If you can make peace all may be well yet, but with an expensive army in Mexico and the increasing apprehension that our victories are but so many steps to another annexation, my fear is that the election will assign to the opposition the Treaty of limits.

The Treasury report, though unpublished by the English papers, has been much noticed in the interior of Europe. If you had the benefit of its figures without the drawbacks of the War, the picture of your administration would have surpassed the highest hopes of Genl Jackson when he congratulated the country on its exemption from a National debt. As it is, the debt is small, if we are compared with other nations.² If it however reaches one Hundred millions it may be considered large for our people, whose maxim it is that one generation has no right to entail a debt upon another. Nothing seemed as unnatural to me as the facility with which the Kings here borrow money eternal without interest, when there is so much difficulty with us at an exorbitant one. If a King were to give 6 per cent it would excite universal astonishment. The effect however is pretty much the same in estimating the influence as a means of peace. Our people have the money and their repugnance to debt is a security for peace. Here a few Bankers have the money and the larger the debt the greater their influence in preventing war.

I cannot of course judge what modification recent events in Mexico may make in your terms of peace. Something was doubtless due to the better knowledge of the country between the Rio Grande & the Pacific. From the accounts I possessed, nothing was worth having further south than [San]³ Francisco—the point which seemed to be pointed out by nature for our occupation with a view to the defence of the Oregon and a safe connection with the Rio Grande.

The primary position with one in making a Treaty would be never to pay any thing for Territory. Before the war something might have been given to settle the boundary as it stood during the separate nationality of Texas but since the war when we have expended so much in money & blood we certainly must have the line with a view to our future defence.

My idea is still the same that after we take the line the best calculated for future defence, the less we receive of Mexican Territory the

better—that the more forbearance you shew the greater our advantages hereafter, the stronger we shall be when the struggle comes on between the West India Islands and Europe. I look forward to the day when Cuba will ask to come into our union, and in order to satisfy that demand it will be an advantage to be encumbered by as little Mexican Territory as possible. If we had Cuba all would be right with us. Possessing then all the tropical fruits we should be completely independent of all the world, and we could realise all that the economists are fancying as within the attainment of the doctrine of free trade.

But I fear you will not thank me for my notions about events which are so distant from me.

In this quarter of the world I see but little to interest you which is not communicated by the newspapers. There is great excitement arising from the growing demands of the people for more popular institutions. The tendency is to a federal system to free trade from its shackles, but such statesmen as Metternich⁴ foresee that if the system is good in that respect it will be demanded after awhile for political purposes. Denmark, Naples, Sardinia, are giving Constitutions enlarging the agency of the people,⁵ and in the end Austria and all Germany must do the same: but constitutions do not of themselves produce the results always anticipated; and it is yet to be seen whether these results can come without war. Every where conservatism and radicalism are in the field, each in danger of injuring the cause of true reform. It is the office of true patriotism and wisdom to make compromise, avoid war, and apply the resources of the people to works of internal improvement.

As affairs stand Prussia is a safer mediator than England. She can approach Austria & Russia as a friend, but is restrained by a public sentiment which is remarkable for moderation and deeply sensible of the necessity for reform.⁶ In Switzerland it seems now probable that the few changes proposed in the *pact* will be accepted by all the cantons, and thus the intervention threatened by the great powers will be avoided.⁷ In like manner it is to be expected that the Italian States will escape the interference of Austria & Russia, these last powers being content to make a parade of their Armies on their own frontiers, and in the end giving as a matter of grace what is now denied as a right.⁸

England has the credit of sympathising even more than France with the popular movement. The consequence is that Lord Palmerston⁹ cannot act with effect directly upon the Governments.

I do not see how we can do much to promote our trade with Germany until these agitating events are removed from the field. If you could put your finger upon some articles in our Tariff that can bear reduction and

yield us more money, such articles as are supplied by Germany, they might be used as equivalents for reductions asked by us of the Zoll Verein. But confined to the Hanover basis¹⁰ it is not likely that we shall accomplish any thing important. The transit duty must fall of itself as a greater injury to Germany than to us, and it is besides too small to aid materially the extension of our products.

My children¹¹ all speak and write German, and may in this manner be benefitted but European society is a bad school for American children. Every thing in the world can be seen and learned here, except the knitting and the sewing which are necessary to an American housewife. If you & Mrs. Polk desire a European residence take Paris or London rather than Berlin. It is all nonsense to say that living is cheaper here. At the other places you may get along with the English, here it is impossible. Besides society here is more exclusive and formal, because the influence of the court is greater.

I often see the Royal family as this winter the King¹² gives balls. He never fails to ask after you, though by the bye he is kept more correctly informed than I am of our prominent events. His Representative in Mexico¹³ is a very talented man, and he, long ago, informed the King that the Mexican people would ultimately sue for incorporation into our Union. There is also a clerk in the foreign office¹⁴ who has travelled all over Mexico, and spent several years in St. Louis and Arkansa &, who was the companion of Washington Irving in his tour among the Kamanches, & Osages.¹⁵ It is thus that these Governments keep near them men who know intimately foreign countries.

Since I have been here I have had another boy which Mrs. D¹⁶ raises with difficulty. Her health is not good, so bad indeed that she has missed, all the court balls; but Mary¹⁷ takes her place, and is quite at ease from her knowledge of languages where I am embarrassed.

If you would give me leave of absence for 2 months I could do more good towards a Zoll Verein Treaty at Washington than by remaining here this spring. At the same time I could improve my condition by a judicious arrangement of my family.

With our best regards to Mrs. Polk

A J DONELSON

P.S. I am anxious to see you—let Mr. B¹⁸ intimate to me that I am at liberty to be absent, and I will take the best steamer, give you the basis of a Treaty that will help our Tobacco & cotton, and return here in two weeks.

Wheaton¹⁹ was frequently absent 6 months from this place. AJD

ALS. DLC—JKP. Marked “*Private*” on the cover. From Joseph Knox Walker’s AE: “*Private*.” From Polk’s AE: received March 21, 1848; answered April 2, 1848.

1. The Washington *Daily Union* published Polk’s Third Annual Message to Congress on December 7, 1847. On December 8 it published War Secretary William L. Marcy’s accompanying report; on December 9, Treasury Secretary Robert J. Walker’s; on December 10, Navy Secretary John Y. Mason’s; and on December 11, Postmaster General Cave Johnson’s.

2. The U.S. government paid off its debt in January 1835. The Democratic party held a celebration of that accomplishment and of the Battle of New Orleans’s twentieth anniversary in Washington City that January 8. Pres. Andrew Jackson did not attend, but he sent a toast celebrating the debt’s elimination as enhancing the country’s “power” and “lustre” and proving its “justice, fidelity, and wisdom.” Walker’s report listed the national debt as of December 1, 1847, as \$45,659,659.40.

3. Word inserted to complete meaning.

4. Klemens Wenzel Nepomuk Lothar, Prince von Metternich, (1773–1859) became Austria’s minister of foreign affairs in 1809 and state chancellor in 1821. A leading exponent of the balance of power, he played a key role in shaping post-Napoleonic Europe at the Congress of Vienna (1814–15), though his power began to wane in the 1820s. A longtime opponent of popular movements and representative constitutions, he became a major symbol of autocratic rule during the revolutions of 1848. He resigned on March 13 and moved to England.

5. Denmark had been an absolute monarchy since 1660. On January 28, 1848, partly to solidify control over Holstein and Schleswig, duchies with both Danish and German ties, King Frederick VII called for a new constitution applying both to those lands and to Denmark proper. In March residents of the duchies who had German connections launched a rebellion against Danish rule; Prussia soon sent military support. Denmark’s control of the duchies was not settled until 1852, after years of violence and diplomacy, but a Danish constitution for a limited monarchy with a popularly elected legislature was developed later in 1848 and enacted in June 1849. Italy, before 1861, consisted of many small political entities. A revolution—the first of those that swept across Europe in 1848—broke out in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies on January 12 when residents of the island of Sicily, hostile toward the Neapolitan government, began fighting its soldiers and police in Palermo. Revolutionaries soon formed a provisional Sicilian government and, by mid-February, controlled almost the whole island. Hearing of those events, impoverished mainland rural masses rose against King Ferdinand II; a demonstration of twenty-five thousand or more in Naples on January 27 forced him, on February 10, to issue a constitution. It established a legislature with an elected lower house, though the king retained extensive power and he did not offer islanders the constitution and level of autonomy that they demanded. In 1849 Ferdinand defeated a lengthy secession attempt on the island and abandoned the new constitution. In the meantime, though, his granting that constitution sparked demands in Turin and Genoa for King Charles Albert to do the same for the Kingdom of Sardinia. He acceded on February 8, 1848, and released the document on March 4. Known

as the Statuto, it likewise preserved most power for the monarch while creating a lower legislative house elected by a heavily restricted franchise. The only Italian constitution of the 1848 revolutions to last beyond 1849, it became Italy's constitution upon unification in 1861.

6. Austria and Russia were at peace at this time. Donelson likely refers to potential mediation between those two conservative powers and revolutionary regimes such as those in Switzerland and certain Italian states.

7. The Congress of Vienna and the Federal Pact, signed in 1815, had restored Switzerland's pre-Napoleonic structure as a confederation of autonomous cantons and had authorized Europe's Great Powers—Austria, France, Prussia, Russia, and the United Kingdom—to enforce the pact. In 1847 radicals supportive of increased centralization, mostly Protestants, gained control of a majority of cantons and thus of the Swiss Diet. France and Austria had lately considered intervening in support of the Sonderbund, a union of conservative Catholic cantons, but did not do so. The radicals defeated the Sonderbund militarily in November. The United Kingdom and France subsequently offered to mediate and, on January 18, 1848, Austria, France, Prussia, and Russia threatened intervention. Undeterred, a Swiss committee began on February 17 to draft a new constitution, modeled in large part on the United States', which voters approved in June. It gave the central government new powers and created a bicameral legislature, though the cantons retained much autonomy; foreign governments lost the authority to intervene. Meanwhile, revolutions elsewhere in Europe prevented those embattled governments from doing so.

8. Austria, in the years before 1848, exerted the greatest influence on Italy. Metternich was growing concerned that other Italian locations, including the Austrian-controlled Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, would replicate the Neapolitan and Sardinian revolutions. On February 21, therefore, he appointed Joseph Alexander, Baron von Hübner, to urge Italian leaders to oppose revolutionary impulses and to promise them Austrian military assistance if necessary. Hübner left Vienna on March 2 and arrived in Milan, Lombardy, on March 5.

9. Henry John Temple, Lord Palmerston, (1784–1865) served as foreign minister of the United Kingdom, 1846–51, in the Liberal party government of Lord John Russell. He later served as prime minister, 1855–58 and 1859–65.

10. On the treaties between the United States and Hanover, see letter and notes in Robert P. Flenniken to Polk, August 11, 1847.

11. At the time of this letter, Andrew J. Donelson had six children: Andrew J., Jr., (1826–59), Mary Rachel, John S. (1832–63), Rachel J. (1835–88), Daniel S. II (1842–64), and Martin. See biographies of Mary and Martin below.

12. Frederick William IV (1795–1861) reigned as King of Prussia, 1840–61.

13. Ferdinand Conrad Seiffart (1802–77) rose through Prussia's civil service ranks to become a privy councilor and a powerful figure in the secret police. He was Prussia's general consul to Mexico, 1846–50.

14. Count Albert-Alexandre de Pourtalès (1812–61), from Neuchâtel (at times under French, Prussian, and Swiss control), was educated in Geneva and Berlin. He traveled through much of the United States in 1832–34 and visited Mexico in 1834. He entered Prussia's diplomatic service in 1838, serving stints

in London, Constantinople, and Naples, and was a clerk in the foreign office at the time of this letter's writing. Later he filled high-ranking diplomatic posts to the Ottoman Empire and to France.

15. In 1832 Washington Irving and Pourtalès joined a U.S. government expedition, led by Indian commissioner Henry L. Ellsworth, through lands to which eastern Indians were being removed—chiefly Indian Territory, today's Oklahoma. The expedition became the basis for Irving's *Tour on the Prairies* (1835); Pourtalès's accounts were published posthumously as *On the Western Tour with Washington Irving: The Journal and Letters of Count de Pourtalès* (1968). The white travelers encountered the Comanche and Osage. The Osage, speakers of a Sioux language, had lived in today's Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, and Oklahoma at the time of Europeans' arrival. A series of treaties between 1808 and 1839 ceded most of their land to the United States; much of it was used to resettle other Native American peoples.

16. Martin Donelson and Elizabeth Anderson Martin Randolph Donelson. Martin (1846–89) was born in Berlin. Elizabeth (c. 1816–1870s?), the widow of Meriwether Lewis Randolph and a cousin of widower Andrew J. Donelson, married the latter in 1841.

17. Mary Rachel Donelson (1829–1905)—later named Mary Emily Donelson Wilcox—was the first child born in the White House, her father being Pres. Andrew Jackson's nephew and private secretary and her mother, Emily T. Donelson, being Jackson's niece and hostess. In 1846 Mary went with her family to Prussia, where she studied German, French, Italian, and Spanish.

18. James Buchanan.

19. Henry Wheaton.

FROM LYDIA HOWARD HUNTLEY SIGOURNEY¹

Sir,

Hartford, Connt. Feb 24th 1848

Knowing the multitude of applications by which you must be addressed, I cannot but feel a degree of painful diffidence, at adding to their number. Yet moved by that maternal impulse, which has in all ages shrunk at no obstacle, I venture to suggest, that should any one of the appointments at your disposal, to the Military Academy at West-Point, remain unappropriated, it would be considered a great favour, if my only son² might be its recipient. He is now at the age of seventeen, and has just completed his school-education, having been destined for the mercantile profession to which the structure of his mind, & his tastes as they more fully develop, seem scarcely congenial. Should there remain for him, no vacant place, at this Institution, I shall still trust your chivalry to excuse the freedom of the request, and the intrusion on your valuable time.

Allow me to hope, that your tour through New-England, the past summer³ though too brief to permit an examination of many points of interest, and peculiarity, was not productive of disappointment.

With my best regards to Mrs. Polk, of whom I hear, as continuing to communicate much happiness to her numerous guests, and whose politeness the previous winter is held in grateful remembrance by my daughter, and myself,⁴ I remain . . .

L. H. SIGOURNEY

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney (1791–1865), a native of Norwich, Conn., had operated schools for girls there and in Hartford before her marriage in 1819. She published her first book in 1815 and became a popular writer of both poetry and prose, issuing more than two thousand articles and more than fifty books. These included *Letters to Young Ladies* (1833); *Pocahontas, and Other Poems* (1841); and *Pleasant Memories of Pleasant Lands* (1842).

2. Andrew M. B. Sigourney (1830–50), of Hartford, spent part of 1848 traveling in the Western United States. Despite his mother's correspondence with various government officials, he did not obtain an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy. In the fall he enrolled at Trinity College, Hartford. After his death from tuberculosis, Lydia wrote *The Faded Hope* (1852), a biography with excerpts from his childhood diary and other writings.

3. Polk, during his Northern trip of June and July 1847, entered Hartford on June 28. His procession stopped outside Lydia Sigourney's home. Greeting them from her balcony, she gave the president a bouquet and his party a drink of water.

4. Mary H. Sigourney (1828–89) was born in Hartford and educated at Lydia's school there. Often her mother's amanuensis, she completed *Letters of Life* (1866) after Lydia's death, ending it with an account of the writer's final months. She married Francis T. Russell in 1855. On February 24, 1847, according to Polk's diary, Lydia attended a dinner party at the Executive Mansion; this letter suggests that Mary accompanied her.

TO WILLIAM L. MARCY

Sir: [Washington City]¹ February 25th 1848

I have examined the draft of the despatch to *Majr. Genl. Butler* in relation to *N. P. Trist*, which you have prepared in pursuance of my instructions, which you have sent to me for my approval.² It embodies the substance of what I wishe[d]³ communicated to *Genl. Butler*, and you [will] therefore send it forward.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP.

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. At Polk's direction, Marcy wrote a dispatch to William O. Butler on February 24 ordering the postponement of payment to Mexico under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo until its approval, and likely modification, by the Senate.

The same day, after reading two offensive dispatches from Nicholas P. Trist to James Buchanan, Polk instructed Marcy to add a paragraph to his dispatch directing Butler to halt Trist's official activities and send him from Mexico City to Veracruz. This paragraph became a separate dispatch, which Polk, Marcy, and John Y. Mason drafted at the White House on February 25. Marcy, at Polk's direction, had it copied and sent the copy to Polk for his approval that day. The dispatch expresses Polk's displeasure with Trist's continuing to negotiate the treaty after being ordered home; with his including the unauthorized tenth article, affirming Mexican land grants in Texas and the other former Mexican possessions; and with his two "objectionable" and "insulting" dispatches to Buchanan. Personally, according to the dispatch, Polk would have preferred to reject the unauthorized treaty; in keeping with his duty to the country, however, he submitted it to the Senate for amendment and consent. Because of Trist's disobedience and disrespect, and the likelihood that he would discourage the Mexican government's approval of the amended treaty, the dispatch directed Butler to send Trist from Mexico City to Veracruz and thence to the United States, delaying only if Trist needed to testify in the court of inquiry into charges against Gideon J. Pillow. See the dispatch in Senate Executive Document No. 52, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 148–50.

3. Text here and below missing or uncertain, light ink transfer.

FROM JONATHAN D. MORRIS¹

Sir

House of Reps Feb 28. 1848

I take the directing you attention to the accompanying letter from J. R. Grant Esq of Ohio the Father of Lieutenant U. Grant of the army.²

Some few weeks since I asked your attention to the claims of Lieutenant Grant³ and now repeat them by the above named letter.

J. D. MORRIS

ALS. Current location of auctioned letter unknown. Probably addressed locally. From two Es in unknown hands: referred to William L. Marcy; received by Marcy and by Thomas S. Jesup March 10, 1848. See also L, typed copy. InU–Li. Published in *PUSG*, p. 375.

1. Morris (1804–75), a Batavia, Ohio, lawyer, served many years as clerk of courts for Clermont County. A Democrat, he represented an Ohio district in the U.S. House, 1847–51.

2. In the enclosed letter to Morris, dated February 21, 1848, Jesse R. Grant mentions having learned of vacancies in the Quartermaster's Department, where, as he has written Morris before, his son Ulysses S. Grant desires "the appointment of Assistant Quarter master with the Brevet rank of Capt." He lists Ulysses' qualifications: almost four years in Mexico without leave; almost two years as regimental quartermaster; having "been in *every* battle fought by Taylor or Scott while he was with them," though not required to as quar-

termaster; service at Chapultepec that William J. Worth deemed “*especially distinguishd*”; and “financial & business talent.” Jesse asks Morris to bring Ulysses’ case to Polk and, failing the appointment, to “ask for him a six months leave, or get him ordered back to the states on the recruiting servis,” so that he may visit his family. ALS. Current location of auctioned letter unknown. See also L, typed copy. InU–Li. That letter has been published in *PUSG*, pp. 375–76. Jesse R. Grant (1794–1873), born in Pennsylvania, was apprenticed to an Ohio judge and then a Kentucky tanner. He operated tanneries at several places in Ohio between 1815 and 1854 and co-owned a leather store in Galena, Ill., after 1841. A Whig and an abolitionist, he served as mayor of Georgetown, Ohio, 1837–39, and became the first mayor of Bethel, Ohio, in 1852. Ulysses S. Grant (1822–85), born Hiram Ulysses Grant in Point Pleasant, Ohio, graduated from the U.S. Military Academy in 1843. A second lieutenant when the Mexican War began, he earned the permanent rank of first lieutenant and the brevet rank of captain in September 1847. He participated in the Battles of Monterrey, Veracruz, Molino del Rey, and Chapultepec and served as quartermaster of the First Infantry Regiment, April 1, 1847–July 23, 1848, and November 17, 1848–August 5, 1853. After the war his company went to Oregon. Grant resigned from the army in 1854 but rejoined it during the Civil War, becoming lieutenant general and general-in-chief for the Union in March 1864. He served as secretary of war, *ad interim*, 1867–68, and again resigned from the army to serve as president, as a Republican, 1869–77. Polk did not grant him the promotion or the leave that his father sought, though his service at Chapultepec did lead to the brevet promotion to captain, approved by the Senate in July 1848.

3. No such letter has been found, nor does Polk’s diary mention a conversation with Morris on this topic.

FROM ROBERT CAMPBELL, JR.

Sir

Ripley Miss Feb. 29th 1848

I received your letter¹ a few days before I left home & requested John P Campbell to answer it. Whether he will or not I do not know. You wish to know when the McCrady² notes are due & what the prospect are to Collect. He says he has no money but will pay the first note off with good cash notes. The first note is due on tomorrow, for, \$300 the other in twelve months.

I have had Bruce with Bishop Otey & O. P. Bennet³ for more than twelve months according to your instructions. He is seventeen years old of good sise & I expect as well prepared in those Branches of study as he ever will be & I regret exceedingly that he cannot go on this March.

In 1844 I heard you speaking to Mr Young⁴ about a note that you had on some men by the name of Broocks.⁵ I have saw one of the Broocks. From the enquirey I have made about them the note can be made. If you

have the note send it to me & I put it in train for collection as they do not wish to be sued. I will be in Columbia by the 20th March. . . .

ROBT CAMPBELL

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received March 15, 1848; answered May 1, 1848; “Relates to my private business./ Informs me that a part of my land has been sold for taxes” (Polk possibly confuses Campbell’s letter with John T. Leigh’s of April 14, 1848, not found, which he discusses in his reply to Campbell).

1. Polk to Campbell, February 11, 1848.

2. Ephraim W. McRady.

3. Robert Bruce Campbell, James H. Otey, and Oliver H. P. Bennett. Otey (1800–1863), born in Virginia, graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1820, two years after Polk, then briefly taught there. Ordained an Episcopal priest in 1827, he moved to Franklin and then Columbia, Tenn., and was consecrated the first bishop of Tennessee in 1834. He also became provisional bishop of Mississippi. A champion of education, Otey founded several schools, sometimes with Polk relative Leonidas Polk’s assistance. Robert Bruce Campbell may have attended Ravenscroft Male Academy; sources disagree on whether Otey founded that school in the early 1840s or in 1848. Bennett (1814–1900s?), a Vermont native, was a Columbia, Tenn., mathematician, surveyor, and engineer. He taught mathematics, natural philosophy, and sometimes chemistry at Jackson College, a Presbyterian institution that operated in Columbia from 1837 until the Civil War. No evidence has been found of a joint educational venture by Otey and Bennett.

4. Evan Young.

5. Campbell refers to brothers Terrel (or Terrell) and Madison Brooks. Tennessee native Terrel (c. 1809–1860s?) was a Hardin County, Tenn., farmer in 1840; was in Wayne County, Tenn., in 1842; lived in Moore’s Crossroads, Hardeman County, Tenn., or Tippah County, Miss., in 1848; and was farming in Tippah County in 1850. Madison’s (c. 1809?–after 1850?) full name may have been James Madison Brooks. Terrel, in 1842, hired Polk and Joseph Knox Walker to defend Madison in a retrial for the murder of John Lowry in the Hardin County circuit court. Their father, Baily (or Bailey), had been convicted of manslaughter against Lowry; Madison’s first trial, in 1841, had ended in a mistrial. Terrel paid the lawyers—who apparently were successful—with a note that, he wrote Polk on May 7, 1842, “it will take all I have to pay.”

FROM JOHN GADSBY CHAPMAN¹

Sir.

New York 62 White St. Feby. 29. 1848

I have been requested to allow a copy to be made from the Medalion Head, I had the honor of executing of you in Wax, about two years since,² for the purpose of executing therefrom a medal by Mr C. C. Wright³ of this city, as one of a series of the Presidents he has in process of execution. I have signified to Mr Wright that I could not do so without your consent, and have deferred a definite answer to his application until I may be favoured with your wishes on the subject. The original model was deposited with the mint, but I have preserved a duplicate of it which will answer his purpose.

JOHN G. CHAPMAN

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Chapman (1808–89), a Virginia-born engraver, etcher, and painter, studied art in Italy before opening his New York City studio in 1836. Publishing firm Harper & Brothers often hired him to illustrate books. His most famous work, “The Baptism of Pocahontas,” was placed in 1840 in the U.S. Capitol. Later in 1848 he moved to Europe, eventually settling in Rome.

2. In 1846 the War Department hired Chapman to prepare a wax relief of Polk and to cast the die for the newest Indian Peace Medal (which bears the date “1845”). Polk sat for him on February 12, 13, and 16. Such medals, bearing the current president’s image and given to Indian leaders by the U.S. government since George Washington’s administration—following an older practice of European powers—signified friendship and peace.

3. Born in Maine, Charles C. Wright (1796–1854) served in the War of 1812, then, in the 1810s and 1820s, developed expertise at etching, engraving, and making dies for embossing. Considered the country’s first medalist, he made dies for medals awarded by the federal and state governments, including those honoring Winfield Scott’s and Zachary Taylor’s accomplishments in Mexico. He spent time in Georgia and South Carolina in the 1820s but mostly worked in New York City. He cofounded the National Academy of Design in 1826.

MARCH

TO JOHN A. MAIRS

Dear Sir:

Washington City March 1st 1848

I have received your letter of the 4th ultimo, in which you inform me that you have made 44. bags of cotton, in addition to the 100. bags which you had previously shipped to New Orleans. I enclose to you herewith a list of articles,¹ which I have ordered to be forwarded to you for the use of the plantation by *Pickett Perkins & Co* of New Orleans.² They will be sent to *Troy* directed to you in the course of a few weeks. You will see that I have ordered some articles in addition to those included in your list, in your letter of the 4th of January. You will not of course give them out to the hands, until in your judgement they shall need them. As soon as the cotton is sold, I will remit to you, the amount, for which the 4. bags belonging to the hands, may sell, that you may distribute it among them, as you may deem equitable and just.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. You inform me, in your last letter³ that you will need another, *work-mule*. You must purchase one, and pay for it out of *Harry's*⁴ hire, for last year, when you collect it. If you cannot do this, apply to my friend *James Brown* of Oxford, and request him to furnish you a *mule* for me. Shew [him]⁵ this letter and he will do so. Tell him if he does so, that I will, send an order [on to . . .] *McNeal*⁶ of Bolivar for the amount as soon as I learn what it is. If it shall be inconvenient for you to leave the place to see *Mr Brown*, if you will write to him or send him this letter, by one of your boys,⁷ he will send you a mule. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Yalobusha County, Miss.

1. The enclosure lists amounts of cotton-bagging, baling rope, twine, salt, and molasses; “3. Dozen pair of negro shoes, of which 2. dozen to be of large sizes,

say No. 12. & 1. Doz of smaller size"; "150. yards, cheap calico for women"; "2 1/2 Dozen hats for negroes, broad brims, . . . as are used in the South as a protection from the sun"; "3. Dozen negro blankets"; and various types of iron and other supplies for the blacksmith, including "10. lbs. Horse shoe nails (letter G. in the head of them)." AD, press copy. DLC-JKP.

2. Polk to Pickett, Perkins & Co., February 29, 1848.

3. Mairs to Polk, February 4, 1848.

4. Long Harry.

5. Text here and below uncertain or illegible, light ink transfer.

6. Ezekiel P. McNeal.

7. Polk probably means one of his own slaves. Mairs at this time had two young daughters but apparently no sons.

FROM EDWARD F. UNDERHILL¹

Respected Friend James K Polk Waterloo N.Y. 3d Month 1st² 1848

I am desirous of obtaining thy autograph. Thou wilt confer a great favor by sending me it. If thou shouldst conclude after reading this to comply with my wish thou canst receive the thanks of . . .

EDWARD F UNDERHILL

ALS. DLC-JKP. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. A native of Wolcott, N.Y., who lost the fingers on his left hand in a cotton-factory accident, Underhill (1830–98) began studying shorthand in 1847 and later became a reporter, author, lecturer, lawyer, social reformer, and resort owner. A leader in the movement to institute court stenographers in New York City, he served stints as stenographer for the state supreme court and legislature. Underhill attended the Woman's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, N.Y., July 19–20, 1848, at which reformers passed resolutions asserting women's intellectual, legal, moral, and religious equality with men and demanding equal suffrage and professional opportunities. Men participated only on the second day. The names of Edward F. Underhill and his aunt, Martha Underhill, are among those beneath the meeting's Declaration of Sentiments, modeled after the U.S. Declaration of Independence, which proclaimed "that all men and women are created equal" and listed "injuries and usurpations on the part of man toward woman," including women's exclusion from the franchise and from colleges and unequal marriage and divorce laws. See the minutes and declaration in Ann D. Gordon, ed., *The Selected Papers of Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony*, vol. 1, *In the School of Anti-Slavery, 1840–1866* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1997), pp. 75–88.

2. March 1. Underhill belonged to the Religious Society of Friends, also known as the Quakers. In that era, Quakers eschewed conventional Western names for months and days of the week due to what they regarded as the pagan origins of such terms.

FROM CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS¹

Washington. 2 March 1848

On behalf of his mother, Mrs Adams,² and the other relatives of John Quincy Adams, the undersigned asks permission, before leaving the city, to express to the President and to his lady the grateful sense entertained by the family, of their sympathy manifested upon the late most trying occasion.³ Without the voluntary and effective cooperation of the Chief Magistrate, both in public and private, they cannot but feel that the efforts to do honor to the memory of their lamented relative must have lost much of their present national completeness.

The undersigned begs to add the expression of his own sentiments of gratitude and respect for Mr and Mrs Polk and remains

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS

ANS. DLC—JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received March 2, 1848.

1. Charles Francis Adams (1807–86), after accompanying his father, then-diplomat John Quincy Adams, to St. Petersburg and London, was admitted to the bar in Boston in 1828. He served as a Whig in the Massachusetts House, 1841–43, and Senate, 1844–45, then became editor and co-owner of the Boston *Whig* in 1846. In 1848 he was the Free Soil party's vice-presidential candidate. Later, as a Republican, he served in the U.S. House, 1859–61, and as minister to the United Kingdom, 1861–68.

2. Louisa Catherine Johnson (1775–1852), born in London to an American father and an English mother, lived in France and England before marrying John Quincy Adams in 1797. Over the next two decades she accompanied him to Berlin, St. Petersburg, and London. Thereafter, in Washington City, she hosted social events as, successively, the wife of the secretary of state and of the president. She wrote two memoirs. A supporter of the antislavery and women's rights movements, she assisted her husband in his fight against the U.S. House's Gag Rule, which forbade the consideration of antislavery petitions. After his death she continued to live in Washington City, where she suffered a stroke in 1849.

3. On February 24, 1848, the day after John Quincy Adams's death, Polk ordered government offices to close and remain in mourning for two days; through his cabinet secretaries, he directed all army and navy stations, navy yards, and commissioned ships formally to honor the late president. On February 26 the state funeral was held in the House Chambers. Polk and George M. Dallas sat on either side of the Speaker; Sarah Childress Polk, the cabinet, the Supreme Court justices, military officers, foreign diplomats, and—as Polk wrote in his diary that day—"a vast multitude of citizens and strangers" attended. House chaplain Ralph R. Gurley presided. Adams's body was then brought to the Congressional Burying Ground and placed in a vault pending its journey to Massachusetts for burial.

FROM JEFFERSON DAVIS

Sir,

Senate Chamber 2d March 1848

I have the honor to enclose the recommendation of the Missi. delegation as far as present at the seat of govt. in favor of Mr. T. J. Johnston of Missi, counsellor and attorney at Law, for a judicial appointment when they shall be provided for in "Minesota."¹

JEFFN. DAVIS

ALS. DNA-RG 59. Probably addressed locally.

1. Davis et al. to Polk, February 1848. Reference is to Thomas J. Johnston, Jr.

TO VERNON K. STEVENSON

My Dear Sir:

Washington City March 3rd 1848

I have received your two letters, of the 14th and 20th ultimo, the former enclosing the form of a deed for the *Grundy*¹ property; and the latter relating to other matters of business and especially to the proposed contract with *Messrs Hughes & Smith*.² In regard to the title to the *Grundy* property, I must defer an answer until I have more leisure, further than to say at present, that the form of the Deed forwarded by you is not satisfactory. Upon that point I will write you fully in the course of a few days. In regard to the new House, and improvements on the lot, to be put up by *Messrs Hughes and Smith*, I stated to you in my letter of the 12th [ult.]³ that the understanding with them was verbal, and that the written memorandum which they furnished did not contain a full description of the building and improvements. I stated to you also that the materials and workmanship were to be of the *best kind*. It was fully understood in my conversation with them, that the workmanship of the house, was to be done in *fine*, and *Medium style*. It was further agreed that I was to write to you, explaining the verbal understanding to you, and requesting you, to reduce the contract to writing with them. As I stated to you in my letter of the 12th ult., it was expressly understood that the whole improvement, was to be made in a style and manner that would be approved, by you, and that as these must embody improvements and conveniences, which would not be specified, they were to make them all under your direction, *without any extra charge*. In a word the general outline of the improvement was talked over, and agreed upon, but as I was very busy, I told them, I would write to you, and that you would attend to the details & enter into a written contract with them. I told them that the establishment was to be made complete & that they were to make no extra charges, to all which they agreed.

In addition to the general inumeration in my last⁴ I remember that the brick walls were to be strong, say 9. inches thick. They urged me to change the contract which you had made with them, and as an inducement to me to do so, they said they would build me a fine, fashionable and showy house. *Mrs. Polk* was pleased with the plan, and I agreed to make the change, but with the express understanding, that you were to enter into the contract with them, and that they were to execute the work to your satisfaction. They, seemed to be fair and honest men, and I hope when you come to make the contract with them, you may have no difficulty in agreeing with him. Of course I did not expect the work to be done in the plain style of work on houses built for rent, but on the contrary they said they would do it, in fine style.

With these statements which are necessarily very general, I leave the whole matter to your judgment. You know what I want, and I shall be satisfied with what you do. I am sorry to trouble you so much about my private affairs. I will thank you to write to me when you have done the contract with them. I will only add that I want it understood that I am to pay no *extra charges*, unless you shall agree with them to make some material additions.

With the kind regards of *Mrs. Polk* and myself to *Mrs. Stevenson*⁵:

....

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Nashville.

1. Felix Grundy.
2. Second letter not found. James M. Hughes and George W. Smith.
3. Word uncertain, light ink transfer.
4. Polk to Stevenson, February 12, 1847.
5. Elizabeth Childress Stevenson.

FROM JOHN A. MAIRS

Yalobusha County, Miss. March 4, 1848

Mairs reports having received Polk's letter of February 1 and one from Robert Campbell, Jr., with instructions regarding Polk's business in Carrollton, Miss. John T. Leigh, Mairs adds, will find out if Polk was paid for hiring out Long Harry. He explains that Polk's cotton left Troy, Miss., "the Last of January 44 bags the first 100 bags in all 144 bags," and that Leigh has the receipts.

"Jan,"¹ Mairs notes, "is all righte." He reports that the slaves have cleared forty more acres, making 140 since he arrived. They will "plant some corn in a few days" and have begun "Preparing the coten Land." After this warm winter, the hogs and other livestock look well; with continued good weather, Mairs expects a good cotton crop. He assures Polk that he will be able to exchange

the bill for his payment for money either through Leigh or with merchants in Carrollton.

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received March 21, 1848; “Relates to my private business.”

1. Jane (c. 1834–after 1897) had been Polk’s slave since October 8, 1846. Robert Campbell, Jr., purchased her for the president from Elija Russel in Columbia, Tenn.; she was sold separately from any family members. Within a few years she married Manuel, also a slave on Polk’s Yalobusha County plantation. They remained there until the 1860s. Three of their five known children survived to adulthood.

FROM LEWIS CASS

My dear Sir,

Washington March 5, 48

I saw Mr Robert McLane¹ last evening, and I find he views the situation of his father,² as you and I do; that he could not accept an appointment merely to bear to Mexico a treaty for ratification.³

In any conversation, he may have with you upon this subject, I will thank you not to intimate to him, that I used his name at all, or referred in the most distant manner to him. Tho’ honoring as I did your kind feelings to his father, and thinking it best therefore to mention the wishes of the son, his sensibility might be wounded at what he might think my indiscretion.

LEW CASS

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally.

1. Attorney Robert M. McLane (1815–98) served as a Democrat from Maryland in the U.S. House, 1847–51 and 1879–83. An 1837 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy, he served in the army’s Corps of Topographical Engineers, 1838–43, before being admitted to the bar in 1843. He later occupied various diplomatic posts and several offices in Maryland’s state government, including the governorship, 1884–85.

2. Louis McLane (1786–1857), father of Robert M. McLane and early on a Delaware lawyer, began his political career as a National Republican and concluded it as a Democrat. He served in the U.S. House, 1817–27; in the U.S. Senate, 1827–29; as minister to the United Kingdom, 1829–31 and 1845–46; as secretary of the Treasury, 1831–33; and as U.S. secretary of state, 1833–34. After moving to Baltimore, he served as president of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, 1837–48.

3. Polk submitted the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to the Senate on February 23, 1848. That body amended the pact—the changes, some of them suggested by Polk, included removing a guarantee of church property, removing an affirmation of land grants by the Spanish and Mexican governments, and removing a promise of promptness in granting citizenship to people in

the new U.S. lands—then approved it on March 10. Polk's diary first mentions the appointment of a commissioner to bring the amended treaty to Mexico "to procure its ratification" on March 7. Expecting Senate consent "in a day or two," according to the diary, Polk decided in that day's cabinet meeting to appoint Louis McLane. He told Robert M. McLane of the decision the same day; Robert agreed to tell Louis, in Baltimore, that evening and to bring Polk his father's answer—Louis McLane to Polk, March 7, 1848—the next morning.

TO JAMES G. M. RAMSEY

My Dear Sir:

Washington City March 6th 1848

In your letter of the 10th ultimo, you express a desire, to be appointed one of the "Visitors" to the military academy at West Point, at the next annual examination, which will take place on the first of *June*. I am happy to have it in my power to inform you, that your wishes shall be gratified. The selection is by law, to be made, by the Secretary of War, with whom I have conferred on the subject.¹ You may calculate with certainty on being selected as the "Visitor" from Tennessee. I see that you have been appointed a Delegate to the Democratic National Convention, which will assemble at Baltimore in May. The examination at West Point will take place a few days after the day fixed for the meeting of the Convention, and I hope you will leave home in time to enable you, to spend a few days, in Washington on your way to Baltimore and West Point. As you have never I believe been in Washington, I sure you could spend a few days pleasantly here. Congress will still be in Session; you would find much to interest you, and I shall be most happy to see you.

I have not time to add a word on public affairs, further than to say, that the Mexican Treaty² is still before the Senate. I will probably receive the final action of that body, in two or three days, possibly to day.

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. If you should not receive official notice of your appointment as "Visitor," before you leave home, you can receive it here, on your way to Baltimore & West Point. J.K.P.

ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Addressed to Mecklenburg Post Office, Knox County, Tenn., and marked "*Private*."

1. Polk's diary does not mention this conversation with William L. Marcy. On the law creating the Board of Visitors of the U.S. Military Academy and the assignment of the power to appoint its members, see note in James Buchanan to Polk, September 19, 1847.

2. Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

FROM LOUIS McLANE

My dear Sir,

Baltimore March 7. 1848

I need scarcely observe that your wishes in regard to myself, in connection with our present relations with Mexico, as explained to me this evening by my son,¹ came upon me most unexpectedly, and that I receive them as a fresh proof of your confidence, which I so highly prize.

I hope you will be persuaded that I have lost none of my desire to gratify your personal wishes; and that, upon a sufficient occasion, there is scarcely any personal sacrifice that I would not make to render service to the Country, and contribute my exertions to promote the honor and success of your administration. I must regret, therefore, that upon the present occasion I cannot feel that the urgency is such as, under all the circumstances, would warrant me in giving you a more substantial proof of my devotion, by acceding to your wishes.

You are aware of the painful and protracted illness of Mrs. M'Lane,² with which it has pleased Providence to afflict me; and I deeply lament to say that the small improvement yet apparent, and the frightful prostration with which her sufferings have been attended, seems to make her situation too critical, without more urgent necessity than I hope may be found to exist in the present instance, to justify my absence from the Country for so long a period as a faithful discharge of the duty you propose might possibly invoke.

What the obligations of your real friends might be, and what sacrifices they might be induced to make, if negotiations for terminating the war were now to be undertaken, independent of the actual posture in which our Mexican relations are at present involved, I scarcely feel authorised to consider. After the severe lesson she has already received, I cannot believe that the Mexican Government, if it be found existing, will hesitate to ratify the Treaty proposed by her own commissioners,³ with the modifications, it is understood, you have wisely recommended; and I therefore, feel great confidence that united with your own firmness, and the cooperation of the Senate, little more than a proper discretion, and *real fidelity* to you, upon the part of your commissioner, would be needed to accomplish your objects.

With my sincere wishes for the consummation of your hopes, I have the honor to be, . . .

LOUIS McLANE

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "*Private.*" From Polk's AE: received March 8, 1848; "Declines, to accept the mission to Mexico, which I had tendered to him through his son, the Hon. *Robt. M. McLane.*"

1. Robert M. McLane. See letter and notes in Lewis Cass to Polk, March 5, 1848.
2. Catherine Mary Milligan (1791–1849) married Louis McLane in 1812.
3. Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and Luis Gonzaga Cuevas, José Bernardo Couto y Pérez, and Miguel Atristáin.

TO LEWIS CASS

My Dear Sir: [Washington City]¹ Friday morning March 10th 1848

I desire to see you this morning. Can you do me the favour to call, before the hour of meeting of the Senate?²

JAMES K. POLK

ALS. MiU–C. Probably delivered by courier.

1. Place identified through content analysis.
2. This meeting likely related to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which the Senate approved on this date, or to the appointment of a commissioner to bring the amended treaty to Mexico. See letters and notes in Cass to Polk, March 5, 1848, and Louis McLane to Polk, March 7, 1848.

FROM CHARLES D. MEIGS¹

Sir Philada. March 10h 1848

I crave your favourable consideration of the accompanying letter from Capt *Drinker*,² now of Hong Kong in China.

Judge Kane allows me to forward a letter which may serve to shew his opinion of Capt. Drinkers merits.³

Should you decide in favour of my worthy friend, you would, at the same time, confer a signal benefit upon me.

CH. D MEIGS

ALS. DNA–RG 45.

1. Meigs (1792–1869) was born in Bermuda and, in 1817, received a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania. He practiced in Augusta, Ga., and then Philadelphia. In the latter city, he became a prominent obstetrician and writer about the care of women and children; taught at Jefferson Medical College, 1841–61; and was vice president of the Philadelphia College of Physicians, 1848.

2. Letter not found. Sandwith B. Drinker (1808–58), a Philadelphian, became a merchant-ship captain in the East Indies. In 1846 he settled in Hong Kong, under British control since 1841–42, to direct commission-merchant firm Drinker & Heyl's operations there and in Guangzhou, China. In 1848 the firm—then named Drinker, Heyl & Co.—employed Franklin B. Meigs, Charles's son, as an assistant. According to James Page to Polk, March 22, 1848, U.S. Consul

at Hong Kong Frederick T. Bush appointed Drinker his deputy and Charles Meigs wanted him appointed Bush's successor. Bush, however, remained in his post until 1852.

3. John K. Kane to Polk, c. March 10, 1848. Born in Albany, N.Y., Kane (1795–1858) became a Philadelphia lawyer and politician. A friend of Andrew Jackson, he played key roles in Jackson's war on the Bank of the United States and in Polk's election as president. He served as Pennsylvania attorney general, 1845–46, and as U.S. judge for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, 1846–58.

FROM JOHN P. HEISS¹

Dear Sir.

Washington March 11th 1848

I know you are sufficiently annoyed about matters of greater importance than mine but satisfied that you feel a deep interest in the success of our paper, I have taken the liberty to trouble you with a short statement of facts.

I informed Mr. Ritchie² yesterday, that our expenses per week were \$825. or \$42,900. per. year; which added to our expenditure for Congressional Reporting, makes a sum total of \$45,400.

Our receipts, even if we were to collect every dollar for subscriptions and advertisements, will not exceed \$56,000. of which, deducting commissions and losses we will not get more than two thirds, or \$37,333. which shows a deficiency, of \$8067.

At this rate we cannot continue the Union longer than the first of May unless we can get a very large circulation for a Campaign paper which we propose to publish.³ This, I fear we can only do through a stronger influence than Mr. Ritchie & myself can bring about. I have thought, that if the Democratic members of Congress would take an interest in this matter by issuing a short address to the People, urging them of the necessity of an immediate organization, and advise them to prepare for a vigorous Presidential canvass; at the same time, to endorse our Campaign paper and recommend it to their constituents. Whether this can be done or not I cannot tell. I know the "*Union*" has bitter opponents in Congress but I hope there are enough to stand by us in a case of emergency.

It is important that it should sustain its present character and be kept up until the close of your administration. Again it would never do to discontinue it in the middle of a Presidential Canvass.

I thought it was proper to make you acquainted with these facts, depending as we do much upon you for advice, and knowing your kind regards for our welfare.

JOHN P. HEISS

[P.S.] Since writing the foregoing, I have thought it would be as well to state, that Blair & Rives informed us when we purchased the *Globe* establishment,⁴ that their expenses for the newspaper were \$10,000 per year more than their receipts. Their subscription list, when we made the purchase, including Daily, Semi-Weekly & Weekly, amounted to 4200. Our subscription list amounts to 15,000. We have discontinued during the past two weeks near 4000 weekly subscribers on account of their not paying up at the end of the year. J.P.H.

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably addressed locally; marked “*Private.*”

1. Heiss (c. 1810–1865) was the Washington *Union*'s business manager, 1845–48. A Pennsylvania native, he was involved with the Nashville *Union*—at times as business manager, as publisher, and as owner—from 1840 until 1845, when he and Thomas Ritchie purchased the newspaper that became the Washington *Union*. In the 1850s and 1860s he was closely involved in Nicaraguan affairs.

2. Thomas Ritchie.

3. From May to November 1848, and once more in April 1849, Heiss and Ritchie issued the *Campaign*, a special edition of the Washington *Union* focusing on the presidential election.

4. In 1845 Heiss and Ritchie purchased the Washington *Globe* from Francis P. Blair and John C. Rives, Polk having instructed them to replace it with the *Union* as the city's Democratic organ. Blair had founded the *Globe* in 1830, at Andrew Jackson's direction, and Rives had soon become his partner. They also had founded the *Congressional Globe*, to publish the proceedings of the U.S. House and Senate, together in 1830. They did business under the name Blair & Rives. Blair (1791–1876), born in Virginia, studied law and served as president of the Bank of Kentucky, 1828–30. He supported Henry Clay for the presidency in 1824 but later became an ally of Jackson. After the Washington *Globe*'s sale he became a Maryland farmer. In 1848 he supported Free Soiler Martin Van Buren's presidential bid. Rives (1795–1864), a Virginia native, lived in Kentucky and Illinois before moving to Washington City in 1824. He worked as a clerk in the Treasury Department before his two newspaper projects with Blair. He was the *Congressional Globe*'s sole owner from 1845 until his death.

FROM ANDREW J. DONELSON

Dr. Sir,

Berlin. March 13th 1848

I have sent to Mr. Buchanan a despatch by the way of Bremen, giving my views of the course of events in Germany.¹ It is numbered no. 62,² but it is difficult to say what may be the state of things after the moment that one records them. All Europe is in a state of fearful agitation. Changes social and political occur so rapidly that they surprise the most experienced, and confound the boldest speculator.

It is said to day that Prince Metternich³ has given his resignation, and that changes of Ministers will soon take place here. All this would doubtless soon have taken place without the present crisis, but connected with it and a thousand other rumours, they but serve to make more plain the general agitation.

Prussia is strengthening her fortifications on the Rhine, and increasing her troops on the frontier nearest to Saxony, Austria, and France. There is doubtless a recent understanding between her, Austria, & Russia for reciprocal & mutual support if aggressive movements spring out of the revolution at Paris.⁴ But this should not be taken as the indication of a wish to interfere with France. I believe that this King is really sincere in the official declaration he has made on this subject. As a proof of it I may refer to his remark when he was told that the canton of Nouefchattel in Switzerland had declared herself a Republic.⁵ His reply was that he ought not to regret it, for he had expended there the last year fifty Thousand Thalers, and had collected only Forty Thousand.

I am invited of course to none of the consultations among the ambassadors of the great Powers, and can therefore only use such facts as reach the Public in the ordinary way. Mr. Rush, by his prompt recognition of the new Government at Paris,⁶ whatever good he may have done to the Republican cause there, has certainly done nothing to recommend his colleagues at such a court as this. It has even been intimated that the Police has been ordered to be on their guard against the American students at the Universities.

The Prince of Prussia⁷ has made a mistake in going to the Rhine. His presence is not needed to prevent the intrusion of French influence there, and he has not the tact to harmonise the public sentiment on German subjects of reform. There is no sympathy between the two nations tending to a common nationality. Germany repels the idea of fraternizing with France in this sense, even while she avails herself of her example to obtain more liberal institutions. This is fortunate because it is the best guarantee of peace.

All depends on the good conduct of La Martine⁸ & his colleagues in the Provisory Government. If they fail to preserve order—or if to control the people they make the fatal mistake of sending them on a crusade to help other nations—the revolution will terminate as that did which brought up Napoleon.⁹ Their true policy is to disband the army, to disregard the menaces of other powers, and to confide in the moral sentiment of the world. Thus sustained their task is a doubtful one. It is even less certain than that of the German reformers who will

prefer to retain Kings as a machine indispensable to the present state of their population.

If we fear Consolidation or centralization what can we expect from France, without any of our checks and ballances? We can only hope for the best and above all that no reaction will take place until Germany & Austria have yielded to Constitutional forms, and given their people freedom of the press, elective parliaments, and the courts and Juries which are essential to the safety of life and property.

But if France becomes aggressive from any cause look out for a general war. It will require all the power of Europe to oppose her. Her Thirty five Millions of people can furnish an army that can bear down any other in the outset. The enthusiasm of such a nation, acting in a false direction, will always produce a Napoleon, and it will not be the less destructive because it raises the Republican flag and inscribes upon it liberty and equality. How great then is the stake in the hands of Mr. Lamartine! How natural is it that all the world should unite in wondering at his sudden elevati[on]!¹⁰ If he does not grow giddy he may give to this old world a regeneration which past experience has declared impossible.

You will see by my despatch to Mr. Buchanan the progress which the Rhine states have made in the way of reform.¹¹ Prussia will ultimately permit the same, and she will retain her place as the head of the Confederation,¹² made stronger, not weakened, by becoming Constitutional. This however may not be if France brings on a war, which will be the pretext for the continuance of absolute power in the hands of Monarchs.

The last papers say that Mr Trist or Genl Scott has made a Treaty with Mexico,¹³ and that some 15 millions is to be paid by the [U]nited states.

My idea has always been that you ought to draw a line from the Bay of [San]¹⁴ Francisco with a view to the protection of Oregon and the control of the Indians, but I would never pay a cent for it. It is enough to spend 50 millions without paying more for peace. I would chastise the Mexicans as long as thy made war, and I would then make the boundary what it ought to be in reference to our own interests. Mexico has no right to burden us with a Territory which is not useful to us. We can no more amalgamate with her people than with negroes.

A J DONELSON

[P.S.] I write this in haste for the Washington—present us kindly to Mrs. P and all your family.¹⁵

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received April 9, 1848. Polk's AE: "Gives his views of the Revolution in France, & the course of *Prussia*, Austria &c, in reference to it."

1. In late February and March 1848, many locations in the German states saw meetings, protests, and petitions by middle-class liberals, farmers, and workers who favored political reforms, including the expansion of civil liberties. These prompted the formation of new governments and promises of reform in many states. A meeting in Mannheim, Baden, on February 27 called for democratic reforms throughout Germany; one in Heidelberg, Baden, on March 5 called for the holding of a Pre-Parliament preparatory to the formation of an all-Germany legislature. On March 7, the day after Prussia's King Frederick William IV dismissed the executive committee of the United Diet, a legislature created the previous year, Berliners signed a petition asking the king to reconvene the diet and grant freedom to the press. His suggestion of future reforms proved inadequate and, over the following days, both a growing crowd of protesters and a growing garrison of troops filled the city. Violent clashes began on March 13. In Austria, students and liberals were inspired by an anti-absolutist speech delivered by Lajos Kossuth in the Hungarian Diet on March 3. They signed petitions calling for reforms in advance of the Lower Austrian Estates' assembling in Vienna on March 13. That day crowds of students and workers gathered in and around Vienna, issuing demands including State Chancellor Metternich's resignation and the writing of a constitution. For a time troops responded with violence, but Metternich resigned that evening. He left for England and, over the next few days, the empire promised a constitution, granted civil liberties, and appointed liberal ministers.

2. Donelson's dispatch of March 10, 1848, to James Buchanan lists reforms attained in Baden, Bavaria, and other German states. Donelson expects reforms to spread and, in particular, expects Frederick William soon to grant freedom of the press in Prussia; he mentions "a large meeting" in Berlin "to day, almost riotous, urging . . . reform." He fears, however, the outbreak of a continental war between revolutionaries and the monarchs of Prussia, Austria, and Russia. Donelson discusses the impact of France's recent revolution on the rest of Europe and the growing popularity of using the German Confederation for "giving unity to Germany"; he notes the benefits of a united Germany to U.S. trade. Enclosures include German newspaper reports on revolutionary developments. ALS and PDs. DNA—RG 59.

3. Klemens Wenzel Nepomuk Lothar, Prince von Metternich.

4. On February 22, the date of a planned but canceled banquet to protest King Louis Philippe's government, reformers gathered in the streets of Paris. Harsh opposition from the Municipal Guard led to violence throughout the city. The next day, to the protesters' delight, Louis Philippe dismissed François Guizot as prime minister. After soldiers fired on a procession of celebrants that night, however, the protesters erected barricades and war broke out in the city. On February 24 the insurgents defeated the royal forces, Louis Philippe abdicated and fled to England, and the victors formed a provisional republican government. That government promptly declared a peaceful foreign policy, but the

events in France helped to inspire revolutions elsewhere in Europe, including those in the German states. In December, Charles-Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte was elected president of France's increasingly conservative Second Republic. A December 1851 coup led to Louis-Napoléon's installation as Napoléon III, France's second emperor. The "recent understanding" to which Donelson refers is probably Frederick William's efforts after the revolution in France to align European leaders against its spread, particularly through a call on Metternich, Russia's Czar Nicholas I, and the United Kingdom's Queen Victoria to unite in peaceful opposition to it.

5. Neuchâtel, since 1815, had been governed both as a canton of Switzerland and as a principality under the king of Prussia. On March 1, 1848, revolutionaries declared it a republic: still a canton but no longer a principality. King Frederick William IV, busy with events in Prussia, did not intervene. Not until 1857, however, did he officially accept the loss of Neuchâtel.

6. In response to an invitation of February 26, U.S. diplomats Richard Rush and Jacob L. Martin met with France's provisional government on February 28. At that meeting Minister Rush presented an address expressing the United States' support for the new government and the French leaders affirmed their country's amity with the United States. In a message to Congress of April 3 enclosing a dispatch from Rush, Polk approved his recognition of the new government, expressed the United States' "congratulations" toward the French people, affirmed America's "policy . . . of non-intervention in the domestic affairs of other countries" but its support for "free government" everywhere, and asserted, "The world has seldom witnessed a more interesting or sublime spectacle than the peaceful rising of the French people, resolved to secure for themselves enlarged liberty, and to assert . . . the great truth, that in this enlightened age man is capable of governing himself." See the message in Senate Executive Document No. 32, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 1–2.

7. William (1797–1888), Frederick William IV's younger brother, became Prince of Prussia and governor of Pomerania in 1840. Viewed as an absolutist and blamed for troops' shooting into a Berlin crowd on March 18, 1848, he fled to England at the king's urging. After his return he served in the National Assembly and, in 1849, commanded forces that defeated revolutionaries in several German states. Later, as William I, he ruled as King of Prussia, 1861–88, and Emperor of Germany, 1871–88.

8. Alphonse Marie Louis de Prat de Lamartine (1790–1869) was a French poet, soldier, diplomat, historian, and politician. First elected to the National Assembly in 1833, he promoted causes of the working class. As foreign minister, 1848, he was the most powerful man in the provisional government. On March 4 he issued a "Manifesto to Europe" announcing the French republic's peaceful intentions. He was among several candidates defeated in that fall's presidential election by Louis-Napoléon.

9. French military and political leader Napoléon Bonaparte (1769–1821), Louis-Napoléon's uncle, served as emperor, 1804–14 and 1815, after the turbulent French Revolution that had begun in 1789.

10. Letter here and below obliterated, hole.

11. Much of the early revolutionary activity in Germany occurred in the western states along the Rhine River. Following the February 27 meeting in Mannheim, whose demands formed the basis for German revolutionary movements throughout March, liberal ministries quickly replaced conservative ones not only in Baden but also in Württemberg and Hesse-Kassel. In Cologne, capital of the Berlin-ruled Prussian Rhineland, thousands gathered on March 3 under the leadership of socialist physician Andreas Gottschalk. They issued a petition that called for democratic political reforms, the protection of workers' jobs, and social-welfare programs. Dispersed by troops, however—and their leaders arrested—they did not win their demands.

12. The German (or Germanic) Confederation was a political association of thirty-nine German states formed in 1815 by the Congress of Vienna. Austria had dominated it from the beginning, using it in the 1830s to repress liberalism, but Prussia had become an increasingly powerful member. Weakened by the 1848 revolutions, the confederation was dissolved that June until 1850.

13. Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

14. Word inserted to complete probable meaning.

15. Donelson wrote his postscript in the left margin.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

My dear Sir/

[Washington City, March 15, 1848]¹

I will come now if you desire it; but within an hour I can finish Sevier's instructions & will then bring them over.² I am in a good vein for writing. Will this do? I hope the Marshal for the Western district of Penna will not be appointed until I can have the pleasure of seeing you.³

JAMES BUCHANAN

ALS. DLC—JKP. Probably delivered by courier on March 15, 1848.

1. Place and date identified through content analysis.

2. On March 11, 1848, four days after Louis McLane declined the appointment, Polk decided to name Ambrose H. Sevier the commissioner to urge upon Mexico's government the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo as amended by the U.S. Senate. On March 14 Polk made, and the Senate confirmed, the appointment; on the fifteenth Sevier resigned his Senate seat. After writing this letter, Buchanan brought Polk—who was meeting with Sevier—draft instructions, then left to make a change the president had indicated. The instructions were further modified after Polk conferred with Buchanan, Nathan Clifford, John Y. Mason, and—through Buchanan and Clifford—the ill Robert J. Walker the next day. Finalized two days later, the instructions are Buchanan to Sevier, March 18, 1848, in *WJB*–8, pp. 8–14.

3. Polk nominated John Keatley to this post on March 17, replacing Arnold Plumer. The Senate confirmed the appointment.

TO JOHN ANDERSON

My Dear Sir:

Washington City March 16th 1848

I received shortly after its dat[e]¹ your letter of the 31st of January last, but my constant and unceasing public duties, occupying as they do, my whole time, have prevented an earlier reply. Indeed I am compelled to abandon almost entirely, all attempts to respond to the numerous letters addressed to me by my friends. Upon the subject to which your letter relates, I would be gratified to have the opportunity to confer with you personally, and, hope you may have it in your power, with[out] inconvenience to yourself to visit Washington. I would be pleased to see you on other accounts, and am sure that you could spend a few days here pleasantly. I cannot so well explain the objects I have in desiring to see you, in any other mode, as in a personal interview.² Can you bring Mrs. A.³ with you? Mrs. P. and myself would be pleased to see her.

JAMES K. POLK

ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Portland, Maine, and marked “*Private & confidential.*”

1. Letter or letters here and below missing, light ink transfer.

2. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the U.S. government assumed responsibility for theretofore-undecided claims by U.S. citizens against the Mexican government. It called for a board of commissioners “To ascertain the validity and amount of these claims.” Anderson’s letter to Polk of June 26, 1848, and John Appleton’s letters to Polk of May 22 and June 5 suggest that the president wanted to discuss with Anderson his possible appointment to this Mexican Claims Commission. ALS. DLC—JKP. Anderson, however, declined the invitation to Washington City on March 20. Polk wrote to Aaron V. Brown on January 9, 1849, that he probably would appoint Anderson a commissioner, but, in the end, the commission did not come into being until after the end of Polk’s term. ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP.

3. Ann Williams Jameson Anderson.

TO VERNON K. STEVENSON

Washington City, March 16, 1848

Polk rejects the deed for the Nashville property that Stevenson enclosed in his letter of February 14 and discussed in that of February 20,¹ because it makes the avenue from the south side of the house to Spring Street “in effect . . . a public street” and stipulates that under certain circumstances the avenue would “revert to” Felix Grundy’s heirs. Polk summarizes the conversations in 1846–47 that led to his purchasing Grundy’s estate and some of John M. Bass’s adjacent land, during which Polk, Aaron V. Brown, Daniel Graham, and John Catron believed that full title to the avenue was included. He encloses a copy

of the contract between Brown and Bass for the purchase, which indicates so.² He would not have bought the estate without the avenue, which “gave to the property its greatest value.”

Polk charges that Bass, his future neighbor, denies his full title so that Bass can use the avenue. Polk encloses a new deed and a copy of the survey on which he and Graham based it.³ Wishing to maintain good relations with Grundy’s family and with his own neighbors, Polk offers to allow Bass access to the avenue if he accepts this deed. If not, Polk will take the case to court or sell the land and find another home. Meanwhile, he directs Stevenson to finish contracting with Hughes & Smith to build the new house.

ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Nashville under cover to Aaron V. Brown; given by Cynthia Holland Pillow Saunders Brown to John Catron at Nashville on April 6, 1848.

1. Second letter not found.
2. Enclosure not found. See the original contract of October 31, 1846, in Brown’s hand. ADS. DLC–JKP.
3. Enclosures not found.

FROM EDMUND BURKE

Sir, United States Patent Office March 17th 1848

The description of the “Hydrostat or Sonde Libre”¹ invented by Captain Ferdinand,² referred by your Excellency to this Office³ has been carefully examined. This instrument promises important usefulness in obtaining soundings ascertaining the state of submarine currents, the character of the water, the degrees of temperature, the nature of the bottom &c, at depths far beyond the scope of any instrument heretofore employed.

It is impossible with the instruments hitherto employed to measure very great depths because the line or wire which sustains them will part, no material having sufficient strength; and even long before the line will part there ceases to be any thing to indicate the moment when the bottom is reached. Captain Ferdinand avoids these hitherto insuperable difficulties, by dispensing with the line altogether, & so constructing the instrument that when it reaches the bottom, the heavy body, or weight which sinks it, is by the action of very simple mechanism disengaged and the instrument being of less specific gravity than water, rises immediately to the surface. The depth may then be determined by the length of time the instrument is under water, or, more accurately, by a simple device which will register the maximum pressure. The instrument seems capable of sounding any required depth.

When a given depth is to be explored, the Register above mentioned may easily be made to disengage a weight at the point required, & such other instruments can be connected with the principal one as are necessary to ascertain the desired facts.

Capt. Ferdinands description of his invention is placed on file for public examination, and, in the opinion of this Office, his communication justly merits a complimentary acknowledgement.

EDMUND BURKE

ANS. DLC–EB. Probably addressed locally.

1. “Sonde Libre” is French for “Free Probes.”

2. Philippe-Jacques Friederich Ferdinand, born in the German lands and educated at the University of Mainz, was an inventor and a captain in the French Foreign Legion. In 1848 and 1849 he was stationed at Philippeville, Algeria. In December 1847 he informed France’s Academy of Sciences of his hydrostat; in 1848 he issued, in Paris, a pamphlet describing the invention.

3. Neither Ferdinand’s letter to Polk nor Polk’s to Burke, if any, has been found. Burke’s annual reports do not record a patent application from Ferdinand during the Polk administration. He appears never to have received a U.S. patent.

TO SIMON CAMERON¹

[Washington City] Friday morning March 17th 1848

The President presents his respects to *Genl. Cameron*, and requests that *Genl. C.* will do him the favour to call, before the hour of meeting of the Senate this morning.²

[JAMES K. POLK]

AN. DLC–SC. Probably delivered by courier.

1. Cameron (1799–1889) was a former Whig, newspaper owner, banker, and railroad president. Born in Maytown, Penn., he represented his state as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate, 1845–49, filling the seat vacated by Secretary of State James Buchanan. He later served as a Republican in the Senate, 1857–61 and 1867–77; as secretary of war under Abraham Lincoln, 1861–62; and as minister to Russia, 1862.

2. Polk’s diary mentions “a large number of visitors this morning” but does not specifically name Cameron. According to the *Congressional Globe*, the latter spoke only once in the Senate that day. During debate on the Ten Regiment Bill of 1848, he said, “I came here this morning determined to sit out the discussion.” He then voted against a motion, which failed, to recommit that bill to the Naval Affairs Committee and to amend it to prevent Polk from carrying it out unless treaty negotiations failed. Cameron then voted for the bill, which passed.

FROM NATHAN CLIFFORD

Sir. Attorney General's office. 18th March 1848

I hereby tender my resignation of the office of Attorney General of the United States. This step has been taken as is well known to you, in consequence of my appointment as Commissioner of the United States to the Republic of Mexico.¹ In retiring from your cabinet, I need not say how much I am gratified, by this new evidence of your confidence and regard. In the new sphere of duty to which you have called me, all I can promise is, that I will exert whatever ability I possess, to accomplish the delicate and difficult object for which the commission has been created.

With assurances of my grateful feelings and with high regard & esteem,

NATHAN CLIFFORD

LS in John T. Reid's² hand. DLC—JKP. Addressed locally and delivered by hand. From Polk's AE: received March 18, 1848; "*Mr. Clifford*, was appointed Commissioner to Mexico, on the day, this resignation was tendered, & set out on his mission the same evening."

1. Ambrose H. Sevier, appointed commissioner to bring the amended Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Mexico, fell ill on March 17, 1848. Uncertain that Sevier would be able to proceed, Polk named (and the Senate confirmed) Clifford as associate commissioner the next day. Clifford, according to Polk's diary, planned to leave for Mexico early in the morning of March 19; Sevier, somewhat recovered, followed him on the twenty-fourth. Polk intended to reappoint Clifford to his former post upon his return, but instead kept him in Mexico as minister through the end of Polk's presidency.

2. Reid (c. 1795 or c. 1800?–1861?), a native of Scotland, settled in Charleston, S.C. In 1837 he applied to the state legislature for permission, as an alien, to apply for admission to the bar. In 1841 he was appointed clerk in the U.S. Attorney General's Office, a post he held into the 1850s.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir, 19th March 1848¹ Washington

After our consultations² an idea occurred to me that I think may be advantageously used by us.

Can not some plan be devised to make the Solct. of the Treasury³ perform the duties of the Atto. Genl. until his return?⁴ The court will perhaps meet in May under the New law.⁵ Many *important* cases are *pending* & the Atto. of the U.S. *must be* prepared & unless this can be done, you will be compelled to have an Atto Genl. If the Solct. can be with propriety assigned to this duty as *next in rank* in the law branch

to the Atto. Genl,⁶ the duties would be well performed and we should do an act that would be *appreciated by his friends in N.Y.*

C. JOHNSON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received March 18, 1848.

1. According to Polk's AE, he received this letter on March 18. Either he or Johnson mistook the date.

2. Polk's diary does not mention his speaking with Johnson since deciding, on March 17, to appoint Attorney General Nathan Clifford associate commissioner to bring the amended Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to Mexico.

3. Ransom H. Gillet (1800–1876), an attorney and a Democrat from upstate New York, served in the U.S. House, 1833–37; as register of the Treasury, April 1845–May 1847; and as solicitor of the Treasury, June 1847–October 1849.

4. Nathan Clifford had resigned as attorney general on March 18 after becoming associate commissioner.

5. A law of 1844 had fixed the start of the U.S. Supreme Court's session, which at this time lasted three months, at the first Monday in December. That law also required each justice to attend one circuit court session per year. Under that schedule, however, the Supreme Court was unable to complete its docket. On March 10, 1848, therefore, the U.S. House passed a bill authorizing the justices for the next year "to hold their sittings at such times and with such intervals as the pressure of business may permit and require," without the need to attend circuit courts. The Senate, however, rejected it on April 18.

6. The Department of Justice did not exist before 1870. At this time, though the federal government employed such other lawyers as the solicitor of the Treasury, the Office of the Attorney General of the United States consisted only of the attorney general, a clerk, and a messenger.

FROM JAMES G. M. RAMSEY

My Dear Sir Mecklenburg [Tenn.].¹ March 19, 1848

I am very much obliged by your favor of the 6th instant which I received yesterday. (High waters doubtless occasioning failures in our Mails). I shall leave home about the 10th of May & reach Washington about the sixteenth so as to allow me to remain there a few days before I go on to Baltimore. On my way to West Point I am desirous of seeing *Publishers* in Baltimore Philadelphia & New-York in reference to printing the "Annals of Tennessee."² The work is yet unfinished but I want to see them amongst other things about the engraving of some maps—of Tennessee as it was in 1770. 80. 90. 1800. 10. 20. 30. 40. & up to the period of publication. The map of each of the earlier Decades I wish to exhibit the forts, stations, treaty grounds &c. &c. as illustrative of our early history. The Libraries too in Washington & the other Cities beyond it I intend to examine in reference [to correcting some]³ anachronisms

& other inaccuracies that have crept into all histories & accounts of this State. While therefore you have gratified me personally very much by sending me as a Visitor to West Point you have also I know been advancing the cause of historical literature so far at least as Tennessee is concerned & her history from 1812 up to this moment I am proud to say is very much the history of the United States.

If the news paper accounts are at all correct you have made a very good treaty with Mexico. If ratified by the authorities of that country⁴ it makes a beautiful finish, as architects say, to an other ways useful & brilliant Administration—that thus closes with more eclat & distinction than any that has preceded it. Had this treaty not have taken place it was my fixed purpose as one of the Delegates to the National Democratic Convention in May to have called upon you to serve your second term.

Since the prospect of peace the Whigs are non-plused & confounded. Up to that time Mr. Clay⁵ was evidently their candidate. I believe he will still be—tho there is great confusion in their ranks & it is difficult to analyse & detect their ultimate intention, especially here in Tennessee. Mr. Bell⁶ is understood to be for Taylor—tho he is now powerless here with his own party.

In any event our nominee if we make no foolish or unfortunate blunder about the Wilmot proviso can be elected.

J. G. M. RAMSEY

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AE: received April 1, 1848.

1. State identified from Polk's AE.

2. Ramsey, a leading historian of Tennessee and a founder of the East Tennessee Historical and Antiquarian Society in the early 1830s, had been working on this book since at least 1840. He eventually published it as *The Annals of Tennessee to the End of the Eighteenth Century*. . . . (Charleston, S.C.: John Russell, 1853).

3. Ramsey struck out the bracketed text.

4. The Mexican Congress approved the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, as amended by the U.S. Senate, in May 1848: the Chamber of Deputies on the nineteenth and the Senate on the twenty-fifth. Ratifications were exchanged at Querétaro on May 30, and Polk proclaimed the treaty on July 4.

5. Henry Clay.

6. John Bell.

TO JAMES BUCHANAN

Dr Sir: [Washington City] Monday Morning March 20th 1848
 Will you send over, the correspondence called for, by the Ho. Repts. between your Department and *Mr Trist*? I must answer the Resolution to day.¹

JAMES K. POLK

P.S. Please return the Resolution.

ALS. Private collection of Dan Hamelberg. Probably addressed locally.

1. The U.S. House, on February 7, 1848, passed a resolution to request from Polk copies of all unpublished correspondence among William L. Marcy, Winfield Scott, Zachary Taylor, and Nicholas P. Trist whose publication would do no harm. Polk transmitted the documents, with Buchanan's response to this letter (published in *WJB*-8, p. 22) on March 20; see House Executive Document No. 56, 30th Congress, 1st Session.

TO JOHN Y. MASON

Sir. Washington 20th March 1848
 You are hereby appointed acting Attorney General, ad interim to do and perform all the duties appertaining to the said office, during the absence of Mr Clifford, from the seat of Government,¹ or until a successor shall be appointed.

JAMES K. POLK

N, copy. DLC-WWC.

1. See letter and notes in Nathan Clifford to Polk, March 18, 1848.

FROM JAMES PAGE

Sir. Philad. March 22. 1848
 At the request of Dr. Charles D. Meigs one of our most eminent physicians and a gentleman who stands deservedly high in the estimation of our whole community I address you in behalf of the appointment, of Capt *Sandwyth Drinker*¹ of Philadelphia and now commission merchant at Hong Kong in China, to the government agency at that place, Mr Burns² the present incumbent returning to the United States in consequence of ill health, he having appointed Mr. Drinker his deputy and as I am informed would be pleased to have Mr. Drinker succeed him.

I have not the pleasure of Mr. Drinker's acquaintance but have known Dr. Meigs all my life and place full confidence in his judgment.

He has ever been a steady and ardent Democrat, and the success of his friend would give him peculiar pleasure, as he seeks for nothing himself.

I most respectfully call the case of Mr. Drinker to your notice.

JAMES PAGE

ALS. DNA—RG 45. Probably addressed to Washington City.

1. Sandwich B. Drinker.

2. Page refers erroneously to Frederick T. Bush (1815–87), U.S. consul at Hong Kong, 1845–52, who did not resign in 1848. Born in Taunton, Mass., Bush soon moved to Boston and in 1843 sailed for China. By 1845 he had established the firm of Bush & Co. in Hong Kong. Appointed by Polk, he served as consul while still running his mercantile business.

FROM FRANCIS AMAY¹

Most Excellent Sir;

Kingston Jama. 23. March 1848

As a Citizen of the United States, I beg leave to take the liberty of addressing your Excellency, on a subject which no doubt will be beneficial to my Country and at the same time forward the views of the Government.

Having long resided in New Granada² for many years and possessing the Spanish language perfectly and wishing to visit other parts of South America, particularly Mexico, I beg to offer to the United State Govt. my services in those Countries, either as Secretary to the Governors of some of the new Provinces ceded to the United State Govt. by Mexico³ or as Consular Agent to the Government where ever it may deem fit and proper to appoint and name me. I also possess fluently the French language, and it is my sincere wish & the unbounded duty as an American to be of some use to my Country's cause.

Tho' a perfect stranger to your Excellency, I am well known to many Ministers & Charge d'Affair of the U. States who have been at Bogotá in New Granada and at Lima in Peru, for instance Col. Watts, Col. Moore, General's McAfee & Semple Mr. Pickett,⁴ and latterly with Mr. Delazon Smith with whom I travelled from Peru, to Ecuador as Interpreter, and private Secretary in 1846.⁵

Should your Excellency feel inclined to employ me in any capacity which may be beneficial to the Govt. I can go to Washington and present my personal respects and make myself known, on your Excellency having the kindness to intimate a wish that I should do so.

I am well known to General Herran⁶ the New Grenadien Minister now at Washington.

Whenever your Excellency may be disposed to write me, or cause the Secretary for the Home Department⁷ to do so, be kind enough to

address to the care of "Hector Mitchell Esqr."⁸ Lord Mayor of the City of Kingston, Jamaica.

FRANCIS AMAY

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City; enclosed in Amay to James Buchanan, March 23, 1848, and forwarded to Polk. From Polk's AE: received May 24, 1848; "Desires to be employed as Sec. of legation &c. in Spanish America."

1. Amay, in 1822, was a soldier under General John Devereux, an Irishman who raised Irish troops to fight in Simón Bolívar's campaign to win independence for Colombia and other South American nations. At that time, according to a letter Amay signed in Bogotá that appeared, translated from Spanish to English, in the *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, April 26, 1823, he and his comrades-in-arms—sentenced to death, in absentia, by their Spanish foes—considered themselves "foreigners by birth and Colombians by adoption," having had "a long residence in this country." According to this letter to Polk, Amay was a U.S. citizen and served U.S. agent Delazon Smith as interpreter and private secretary in Peru and Ecuador in 1845 before moving to Jamaica. He did not win an appointment from Polk.

2. From 1830 to 1863, Colombia officially was known as the Republic of New Granada.

3. Richard B. Mason served as military governor of California, 1847–49. Donaciano Vigil was civil governor of New Mexico, 1847–48, though the region was ultimately under military control. Mason (1797–1850), born in Virginia, joined the army in 1817 and served in the Black Hawk War. A colonel since 1846, he was brevetted brigadier general effective May 30, 1848. He became California's governor by virtue of succeeding Stephen W. Kearny as commander of the U.S. forces there. Santa Fe native Vigil (1802–77), a longtime soldier and officer in the Mexican army, filled various civil posts in New Mexico under Mexican rule, including a regular seat in the Department Assembly, 1838–40 and 1843–45, and an alternate seat, 1846. He also traded in Santa Fe and published the newspaper *La verdad*, 1844–45. He fought for Mexico at the beginning of the war with the United States but in September 1846, when U.S. forces took Santa Fe, he resigned his commission and became secretary of territory for New Mexico under U.S. rule. Gov. Charles Bent's murder in January 1847 made Vigil acting governor; in December he was appointed governor. He was again secretary of territory, 1848–51, and afterwards served in the territorial legislature.

4. Beaufort T. Watts, Thomas P. Moore, Robert B. McAfee, James Semple, and James C. Pickett. Watts (1789–1869) was a South Carolina lawyer and militia officer and a War of 1812 veteran. He served as South Carolina secretary of state before becoming secretary of legation to Gran Colombia (this state, officially the Republic of Colombia, existed from 1819 to 1830 and included modern-day Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela), 1824–26; chargé d'affaires, *ad interim*, there, 1825–26 and 1826–27; and chargé, 1827–28. He was legation secretary to Russia, 1828–29, and secretary to South Carolina's

governor many years between 1834 and 1861. McAfee (1784–1849), a Mercer County, Ky., lawyer and a War of 1812 veteran, served as lieutenant governor of Kentucky, 1820–24, and was elected to numerous terms in the state house and senate between 1800 and 1842. He was chargé d'affaires to New Granada, 1833–37. McAfee was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention of 1832 and was president of the U.S. Military Academy's board of visitors, 1842–45. Semple (1798–1866), born in Kentucky, served in the War of 1812 and the Black Hawk War and practiced law in Kentucky and Illinois. He served in the Illinois House, 1832–38 (as Speaker, 1834–38); as Illinois attorney general, 1833–34; as chargé d'affaires to New Granada, 1837–42; as an Illinois Supreme Court judge, 1842–43; and as a Democrat in the U.S. Senate, 1843–47. Later he invented a steam-powered road wagon. Pickett (1793–1872), a Virginia-born Kentucky soldier, lawyer, and newspaper editor, served in Kentucky's legislature, 1822; as its secretary of state, 1825–28; as secretary of legation at Bogotá, 1829–33; as chargé d'affaires, *ad interim*, there, 1833; as U.S. commissioner of patents, 1835; as fourth auditor of the Treasury, 1835–38; as commissioner to Ecuador, 1838–39; and as chargé d'affaires to Peru (initially to the Peruvian-Bolivian Confederation), 1838–45.

5. Amay misdates events of 1845. Delazon Smith, in December 1844, was appointed U.S. special agent to Ecuador. When Gran Colombia had dissolved in 1830, U.S. citizens had held claims against it, including for the merchant ships *Josephine* (seized by a Gran Colombian warship in 1819), *Ranger*, and *Morris* (both seized by privateers in 1825). Gran Colombia had promised payment for the *Josephine* and *Ranger* in a convention signed in 1829. The newly independent nations of New Granada and Venezuela had since paid their shares of all three claims, but Ecuador had not. Smith's job was, after conferring with Seth Sweetser, U.S. consul at Guayaquil, to negotiate payment for them and various other claims. He sailed to Peru and proceeded by land to Ecuador. Owing to Ecuador's civil war and the absence of a government with clear authority, however, he returned home without having completed his mission. Smith (1816–60), a lawyer, edited several newspapers in Rochester, N.Y., before founding the *Western Empire* in Dayton, Ohio. In 1846, following his mission to Ecuador, he moved to Iowa, where he became a Methodist minister. He later moved to Oregon and represented it in the U.S. Senate, 1859.

6. Pedro Alcántara Herrán (1800–1872), born in Bogotá, joined Colombia's struggle for independence from Spain in 1814 and became a general in 1828. He served stints as secretary of war and secretary of interior and foreign relations before becoming president of New Granada, 1842–45. After his presidency he served again as secretary of war; as commanding general of the army; and as minister to the United States, 1847–49 and 1855–63.

7. Amay refers to Secretary of State James Buchanan. He addressed his cover letter to "James Buchannan Esq/Secretary of State for the Home Department." ALS. DLC–JKP.

8. Mitchell (c. 1768–1853) served as mayor of Kingston, 1833–53. A prominent merchant who had lived in Jamaica since about 1806, he was, at times, a captain in Kingston's militia, a member of its Common Council and House of

Assembly, an assistant judge in its court of common pleas, and its *custos rotulorum* (governor's representative).

FROM WILLIAM M. SMYTH

Dear Sir:

Washington city, March 23, 1848

Continued indisposition prevents my calling upon you in person, and I trust that in the midst of your many arduous duties you will give me a small share of your attention. I expect to see you as soon as my health will permit, which my physician, Dr. Hall,¹ thinks will be in a few days.

I find, my dear Sir, in looking back upon my past life, that I have spent upwards of fourteen years in conducting the public press. The field of my labors has been in the state of Mississippi, in the city of Grand Gulf and at Jackson, the capital of the state. I believe that I am one of its oldest editor's, now living, and my intercourse with the leading men in our Valley population has made me familiar with all the prominent members of our party in the adjoining states. You commenced your career in the Congress of the Nation, about the same period at which I entered the press,² and I think that during the time which has elapsed, and the violent contests which have occurred, I cannot have remained entirely unknown to you as a zealous co-operator in the same great cause which you have sought to advance with so much honor and distinction to your own political fame.

The troubles and trials of an editor's life—the sacrifice of time and money, and the little pecuniary reward which it generally returns, are incidents of life which a long public intercourse with your fellow men will have enabled you to appreciate. It is in view of an experience of this kind, and at the suggestion of several kind and devoted friends that I now ask the aid of your friendly services, bearing in mind the manifestations of regard which you have heretofore shown me.

By the passage of a bill now before Congress, a Mission to *Guatemala* will be established.³ That country bordering upon the confines of Mexico, and situated immediately south of the Great Isthmus of Tehauntepec, presents a field for the labors of an American Minister, of unbounded interest. The extension of our own commerce on both shores of this continent and the protection of American traders, as well in the interior as on the Ocean, are not less objects of important consideration than the cultivation of a close and familiar intercourse with the several powers in that near continent with whom Great Britain has heretofore enjoyed so exclusively their favor and confidence. I feel that the duties of a Mission to that power would call forth all my energies and whatever talent my long public life and experience may have given me.

To your kind consideration, therefore, I leave this subject. I have mentioned to you already the fact of an unsettled account with the government,⁴ and I recur to it to say, that I am prepared to discharge it before receiving any office from your hands. And having this obstacle removed, I trust that your friendly feelings in my behalf will be permitted to *indulge* the request which I have the honor now to make.

W. M. SMYTH

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Joseph Knox Walker's AE: received March 24, 1848.

1. James C. Hall (1805–80), born in Alexandria, D.C., received his medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania in 1827. He spent one year as a resident physician and surgeon at the Philadelphia Almshouse before relocating to Washington City in 1828.

2. Polk entered the U.S. House in 1825, nine years before Smyth's earliest known editorial post, at the Grand Gulf (Miss.) *Advertiser*.

3. "An Act further to supply Deficiencies in the Appropriations for the Service of the Fiscal Year ending the thirtieth of June, eighteen hundred and forty-eight." *SL*, 30th Congress, 1st Session, Chapter 23. Between 1825 and 1842, the United States maintained a single mission, usually led by a *chargé d'affaires*, to the Federation of Central America. That union of states dissolved in the 1840s. This bill—the same one that provided for a *chargé* to the Papal States (see letter and notes in George C. Sibley et al. to Polk, c. 1848)—provided for one specifically to Guatemala, as well as *chargés* to Ecuador (outranking the consul at Guayaquil, previously the only U.S. diplomat there) and Bolivia (the first U.S. diplomat there since 1839, when the Peru-Bolivian Confederation had dissolved and *Chargé* James C. Pickett had taken up the Peruvian mission). The House and Senate passed different versions of the bill on March 8 and 21, 1848, respectively. On March 24 the Senate concurred in a version the House had passed; Polk signed it three days later. Despite this letter, Polk did not appoint Smyth to the Guatemalan mission. He sent John Appleton to Bolivia, Vanbrugh Livingston to Ecuador, and Elijah Hise to Guatemala.

4. Letter, if any, not found.

FROM GEORGE T. WOOD¹

Sir, Executive Department, Austin, March 23, 1848

The Legislature of the State of Texas, at its session just closed, passed laws to organize into a County the territory of Santa Fe, and to establish therein a Judicial District,² and as rumors have reached this State of an attempt to establish there a separate government,³ it is apprehended that impediments may be thrown in the way of the contemplated organization. In view of such a contingency the Legislature of Texas made it the duty of the Executive by the enclosed Joint Resolution to request your Excellency to issue orders to the Military Officers stationed in Santa Fé

to aid the Officers of Texas in organizing the County of Santa Fé and the eleventh judicial district of the State of Texas, and in enforcing the laws of this state if it should be necessary to call upon said officers of the United States to put down any resistance to the laws of Texas.⁴

I have the honor therefore, to request that your Excellency will issue to the Military Officers of the United States stationed in Santa Fe, orders conformable to the views of the enclosed Joint Resolution and to the end that the State of Texas may in no wise be embarrassed in the exercise of her rightful jurisdiction over that territory.

GEO. T. WOOD

LS, copy, in R. C. Matthewson's⁵ hand. Tx.

1. Wood (1795–1858), a veteran of the Creek War of 1836, served in his native Georgia's legislature, 1837–38. He then became a planter in the Texas republic and a member of its Congress, 1841–42. After the U.S. annexation of Texas, he served as a state senator, 1846; colonel of the Second Texas Mounted Regiment, 1846; and governor, 1847–49.

2. Wood signed the laws creating Santa Fe County and the Eleventh Judicial District on March 15, 1848. They comprised a large swath of land east of the Rio Grande that Texas had claimed since its days as a republic and to which Mexico had renounced its claim in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. They included half of the present-day state of New Mexico and parts of today's Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas.

3. Wood refers to events in the city of Santa Fe. Although Congress had not yet begun debating a bill for a territorial government for New Mexico, in September 1846 the U.S. Army had established a temporary government through the Organic Law of the Territory of New Mexico—afterwards known as the Kearny Code, for Gen. Stephen W. Kearny, its author and, at the time, the region's commanding officer. That government included a governor (Donaciano Vigil for most of 1847 and 1848) and an elected legislature, which met for the first time on December 6, 1847, in the city of Santa Fe. During its first week the legislature passed (and Vigil soon signed) a bill calling for the election of delegates to a convention to consider annexation to the United States. Formal annexation as a separate jurisdiction would have challenged Texan claims to much of the region. The convention met on February 10, 1848, but came to no decision. According to a letter to the *St. Louis Republican*, reprinted in the *Philadelphia North American and United States Gazette* of May 11, Catholic clergymen “drugged” and “locked up” pro-annexation delegates; with them absent, Vigil “promptly prorogued the convention.” Texas's official claim to much of New Mexico on March 15, however, provoked both local opposition and, due to the legality of slavery in Texas, national debate. The dispute was not resolved until the Compromise of 1850, in which Congress created New Mexico Territory and—compensating Texas with ten million dollars—set Texas's present-day northern and western boundaries.

4. Enclosure not found. The joint resolutions, approved on March 20, affirmed that “Santa Fe is a part of the integral territory of the State of Texas” and

noted inhabitants' effort "to establish a separate government." They instructed Texas's congressional delegation to urge the federal government to oppose that effort and instructed Texas's U.S. senators to vote against a treaty with Mexico if it reduced the state's boundaries from those claimed by the erstwhile Texas republic. The resolutions instructed Wood to direct Santa Fe County's people "to organize their county," to make the request of Polk embodied in this letter, and to send copies of the resolutions to Texas's congressional delegation. See "Preamble and Joint Resolutions." *The Laws of Texas, 1822–1897*, 2nd Legislature, Chapter 151. Edward W. B. Newby (c. 1804–1870) was the U.S. Army's commanding officer at Santa Fe. Born in Virginia, he became a justice of the peace in Brown County, Ill., before joining the First Illinois Infantry Regiment as a captain in May 1847. Promoted to colonel in June, he commanded the Ninth Military District, based at Santa Fe, September–December 1847 and again beginning February 1848. In May 1848 Newby led an expedition against, and signed a treaty with, the Navajo. He left the army that October but rejoined later, 1855–63.

5. R. C. Matthewson was a clerk in the Texas State Department. He may have been Robert C. Matthewson, a lawyer who had practiced in Fannin and Lamar Counties, and who was in Peters Colony, Texas, in 1845. In April 1848 Robert, recently returned from editing an American newspaper in Veracruz, was hired to edit the English section of the New Orleans *La patria*. He purchased, with another, the Bonham (Tex.) *Western Argus* late in 1848, moved the office to Paris, Tex., and published the *Times* there. In 1849 Robert edited the *Austin Texas State Gazette*.

FROM JAMES BUCHANAN

[Washington City]¹ 24th [March]² 1848

Mr. Buchanan respectfully requests that the President would furnish him with a copy of the letter which he addressed to the President in February 1845, in answer to the Presidents letter of February 17th 1845.³ If Mr. B kept a copy of his answer it cannot now be found.

[JAMES BUCHANAN]

AN. DLC–JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received March 24, 1848; "Requests a copy of his letter to me, in February 1845, in which he pledged himself, in the event he should become a candidate for the Presidency, to resign his seat in the Cabinet."

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. Buchanan erroneously wrote "February." Correct month identified from Polk's AE and Polk's diary.

3. In his letter of February 17, 1845, Polk informed Buchanan, "Should any member of my Cabinet become a Candidate for the Presidency or Vice Presidency of the United States, it will be expected upon the happening of such an event, that he will retire from the Cabinet." In his reply of February 18, Buchanan admitted possible interest in running for president in 1848. He prom-

ised, however, "I shall never make any personal exertions for that purpose, without your express permission, so long as I may remain a member of your cabinet. If, however, unexpectedly to myself, the people should, by a State or National Convention, present me as their Candidate, I cannot declare in advance that I would not accede to their wishes: but in that event I would retire from your Cabinet, unless you should desire me to remain." Polk, in his diary entry of March 24, 1848, quotes Buchanan's letter of that date in full and complains, "Mr. Buchanan has been publicly a candidate for the Democratic nomination for the Presidency for some months past, & this is the first time that he seems to have remembered the promise. . . . I have constantly, for months, felt the embarrassment which he gave me by remaining in the Cabinet. He has been selfish, & all his acts and opinions seem to have been controlled with a view to his own advancement, so much so that I can have no confidence or reliance in any advice he may give upon public questions. I could not . . . dismiss him during the pendency of the war with Mexico, and in the face of a talented and powerful opposition in Congress, without the hazard of doing great injury to my administration by endangering the success of all my measures." Polk attributes Buchanan's sudden request for the letter to a Senate investigation into the leaking of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and related documents to New York *Herald* correspondent John Nugent, possibly by Buchanan in an effort to obtain positive press for his candidacy. Polk resolves to look for Buchanan's 1845 letter.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

[Washington City]¹ 24h March '48

Mr. Clark² called to see me last evening. He had just recd a letter of Mr. Hise³ strongly expressing his obligations &c & is willing to receive either of the newly created commissions.⁴ If he had choice he would select first Rome, then Bolivia & the others would alike to him.

He informed me the bill had passed & desired me to say the above to you & which I promised to do this morning but my other duties call me to the department.

C. JOHNSON

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received March 24, 1848.

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. Virginia native Beverly L. Clarke (1809–60) became a Franklin, Ky., lawyer. He served in the Kentucky House, 1841–42, and as a Democrat in the U.S. House, 1847–49. Later he was minister to Guatemala and Honduras, 1858–60.

3. Elijah Hise (1802–67), born in Pennsylvania, became a Russellville, Ky., lawyer and served in the Kentucky House, 1829. He ran unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor in 1836. Polk appointed him chargé d'affaires to Guatemala, March 31, 1848–June 21, 1849, and authorized him to negotiate a commercial treaty with El Salvador. A Democrat, Hise later served in the U.S. House, 1866–67.

4. See letters and notes in George C. Sibley et al. to Polk, c. 1848, and William M. Smyth to Polk, March 23, 1848, on the law of March 27, 1848, concerning U.S. diplomatic representation in the Papal States, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Guatemala.

FROM ALFRED BALCH

Dear Sir,

Nashville 25th March 1848

The whole Democracy¹ of Tennessee is delighted with the Treaty and its ratification by the Senate.² If Mexico shall agree and “be wise unto her salvation”³ your destiny will be happily accomplished. During the remainder of your term you will be at ease. We have some talk about your successor and by not a few busy bodies, who are moved by selfish views. As I have no concealments upon any subject public or private, I have stated to many from all parts of the state who have made enquiry of me, that I am decidedly in favor of old Buchanon,⁴ not only because Pennsylvania has irresistible claims, but because I believe him to be an able firm and patriotic man who is right upon all the great questions in which we are concerned. Substantial considerate men throughout Ten concur with me in this opinion. So they write to me and tell me.

With respects to Mrs Polk I remain . . .

ALFRED BALCH

ALS. DLC–JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk’s AE: received April 3, 1848.

1. Democratic party.

2. The Senate, under Article II, Section 2 of the Constitution, gives its “Advice and Consent” to a treaty; the president subsequently ratifies it (i.e., declares it binding). On Senate action regarding the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, see note in Lewis Cass to Polk, March 5, 1848.

3. Paraphrase of 2 Timothy 3:15: “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.”

4. James Buchanan.

FROM RANSOM H. GILLET

My Dear Sir,

[Washington City]¹ March 25 48

The other day I gave Mr Eames a strong letter for a South American mission.² In it I expressed my *sincere convictions*, & in no respect do I wish to interfere with that in what I now write. Last evening I gave you my views very briefly on the subject of the mission to Rome.³ If your representative there shall fail in discretion, it will be unfortunate for the country. To act with reference to religious grounds, will be to notify

the Pope⁴ that we act for political effect, upon religious grounds, & thus destroy the might & influence of our minister. After giving the matter some reflection, I have concluded to recommend Reuben H. Walworth,⁵ of Saratoga Springs NY. for the appointment. He is a democrat, & as I suppose, not mixed up in the squabbles in our state. He was in the congress before you came here—was one of our circuit judges, & the best we ever had. From April 1828 he has been chencellor of our state & goes out under the new constitution.⁶ He is now closing up the old business of the court & will very soon be out of employment. He is about 58 years of age, & is one of the most eminent jurists of our country & has studied the civil law in the original language, & of course understands the language of Italy. I know he is a good Latin & French schollor. He is prudent & discreet & remarkably quick of apprehension. He is a widower, whose children are grown up &, I believe all settled. I do not know that he would accept an office of that rank, though Gov Throop⁷ of our state went to Naples. I have convinced myself, that you would do well to offer him the place: If he should go there, I will be responsible that he will do you & our country no discredit.

You must excuse me for troubling you with what does not relate to my own duties. My excuse is, a desire to promote the public service.

R H GILLET

ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably addressed locally; marked “Confidential.” From Polk’s AE: received March 25, 1848; “*Private*.”

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. Letter, if to Polk, not found. Massachusetts native Charles Eames (1812–67), trained in law, edited the New York *New World*, 1845, before becoming a clerk in the Navy Department and then associate editor of the Washington *Union*. Polk did not appoint him to any of the new missions in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Guatemala, but later made him commissioner to Hawaii, 1849. He served as chargé d’affaires—soon promoted to minister—to Venezuela, 1854–58.

3. Gillet probably refers to a conversation at the Executive Mansion. Friday, March 24, 1848, had been one of the regular evenings on which Polk welcomed visitors.

4. Pius IX.

5. Walworth (1788–1867), an upstate New York lawyer born in Connecticut, became a master in chancery in 1811. He served in the U.S. House, 1821–23; as a state circuit court judge, 1823–28; and as state chancellor, 1828–48. John Tyler appointed him an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court in 1844 but the Senate did not confirm his nomination. Polk did not appoint him chargé d’affaires to the Papal States. Walworth ran for New York governor in 1848 but was defeated by Hamilton Fish.

6. New York’s new constitution, written and approved in 1846, took effect in 1847. It reorganized the state’s judicial system, eliminating the post of chancellor as of 1848.

7. Enos T. Throop (1784–1874), an Auburn, N.Y., lawyer, served in the U.S. House, 1815–16; as a New York circuit court judge, 1823–28; as lieutenant governor, 1829; as governor, 1829–33; as naval officer at New York City, 1833–38; and as chargé d'affaires to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, 1838–42. He became a Michigan farmer in 1847. Early on a Democratic Republican, Throop became a Democrat.

FROM GEORGE P. A. HEALY¹

Washington March 25th 1848,
at Mrs. Whitwell's² 4 1/2 Street

Sir,

I am painting Mr. Webster³ in the U.S. Senate for Faneuil Hall,⁴ Boston, making his reply to General Hayne, on which occasion I believe you were present.⁵ I am therefore desirous to take your likeness for this work; two sittings will be sufficient. Pray inform me at what hour & day I may wait upon you.

GEO. P. A. HEALY

P.S. I write this at the suggestion of Mr. Webster.

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed locally. From Polk's AE: received March 26, 1848.

1. Boston native Healy (1813–94) was a painter best known for his portraits. He sailed to Europe in 1834 and spent most of the next decade in Paris and London. His subjects at this time included Lewis Cass, Andrew Jackson, and Louis Philippe. *Webster's Reply to Hayne*, which he discusses in this letter, was originally commissioned—as were many of his works—by that French king; he completed it in 1851 and it hangs in Faneuil Hall. Thereafter he lived alternately in America and Europe. Healy painted both Polk and Sarah Childress Polk in 1846 and painted Polk's official White House portrait in 1858.

2. Anna W. Coyle Whitwell (1799 or 1800–1858) operated, at least from 1842 to 1851, a boardinghouse on Capitol Hill in Washington City, known as Mrs. Whitwell's. Residents included several members of Congress. She was the widow, since 1838, of Post Office Department clerk John G. Whitwell. Her parents, John and Catharine Coyle, had run—likely, at times, with her assistance—another boardinghouse serving members of Congress between 1802 and the 1840s.

3. Daniel Webster.

4. Built in 1742 (with funding from merchant Peter Faneuil) and expanded in 1806, Faneuil Hall was, and remains, a Boston marketplace. It also was used, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for town meetings. The many prominent speakers there included George Washington, Webster, George Bancroft, and abolitionist Frederick Douglass; Polk visited the building during his Northern trip in June 1847.

5. *Webster's Reply to Hayne* depicts a scene from the Webster-Hayne Debate, in January 1830. During consideration of a Senate resolution regarding Western

land sales, Robert Y. Hayne and Webster debated, besides the ostensible topic, federal power and revenue; relations among the Northeast, South, and West; tariffs; slavery; the national debt; partisanism; internal improvements; and the nature of the Union. Hayne, in his second speech, quoted authorities who described the Constitution as a “compact” among the states. He defended Southerners’ fidelity to the Union but argued that nullification—the belief, growing among South Carolinian politicians since the passage of controversial tariff legislation in 1828, that individual states could nullify federal laws they deemed unconstitutional—was a necessary check on federal power. In his response of January 26–27, the one portrayed by Healy, Webster argued that all the states “are parts of the same country,” whose interests, under the Constitution, the federal government served. The people, he explained, not the states, had created the Constitution and the federal government. The federal courts, not the state legislatures, should determine the constitutionality of federal laws; constitutional interpretation, according to Webster, fell ultimately to the U.S. Supreme Court. Nullification, he argued, would lead to “civil war.” He ended with a plea for “Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable!” Soon published and a topic of conversation throughout the country, the speech became the iconic statement of a developing Unionist interpretation of the Constitution and the federal government. Contrary to Healy’s belief, Polk, then a member of the U.S. House—he chaired the Committee of the Whole part of January 26—probably did not witness any of Webster’s speech. Hayne (1791–1839), a Charleston, S.C., lawyer and a War of 1812 veteran, served in the South Carolina House, 1814–18; as state attorney general, 1818–22; in the U.S. Senate, 1823–32; as governor, 1832–34; and as Charleston mayor, 1835–37. A Democrat for most of his Senate career, he became a Nullifier and was president of his state’s Nullification Convention in 1832. In the late 1830s he became a railroad president.

FROM PICKETT, PERKINS & CO.

Dear Sir

New Orleans March 25th 1848

We wrote you on 28th ult. acknowledging receipt of a further shipment of your cotton from your shipping merchant at Troy Missi.,¹ of 44 bales.

We have now to own² receipt of your favor of 28th ult. with a list of articles, supplies &c, for your plantation, which you request us to purchase & ship to Troy.³

Annexed, we hand you an invoice of the purchases made corresponding with your order,⁴ which we have shipped to T W Beale Esq Troy, with instruction to forward the same to the manager of your plantation,⁵ & which we hope will arrive safely & prove satisfactory to him.

The amt. of the invoice \$489.24 at your debit, we shall scarcely need before you will probably order the sale of your cotton, and we shall not therefore draw upon you for it as you suggest.

Our cotton market is brought to a stand by the exciting & important news just recd from abroad.⁶ In fact we have no market at present, prices being merely nominal, though some offers have been made *to day* for middling at 6., 6 1/4 & 6 1/2 ct. We find our market, will be very seriously affected by these advices when operations are resumed.

PICKETT PERKINS & CO

L in William S. Pickett's hand. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City and marked "p Mail." From Polk's AE: received April 3, 1848.

1. Thomas W. Beale.
2. In a now-rare usage, "own" can mean "acknowledge."
3. Erroneous reference is to Polk to Pickett, Perkins & Co., February 29, 1848.
4. The company enclosed an invoice for the items in the lists that Polk had enclosed in Polk to Pickett, Perkins & Co., February 29, 1848, and Polk to John A. Mairs, March 1, 1848, plus charges for insurance and commissions. The invoice, dated March 23, reflects small changes in the amounts of rope, calico, and assorted-sized bar iron from those Polk had ordered. D in William S. Pickett's hand. DLC—JKP.
5. John A. Mairs.
6. Reference is to the revolutionary activity and potential for further violence and upheaval in Europe. See letters and notes in Andrew J. Donelson to Polk, February 22, 1848, and Donelson to Polk, March 13, 1848. European demand for cotton declined amid economic uncertainty and concern with national and personal safety. It recovered when the revolutions ended in 1849.

FROM JAMES SHIELDS

Dear Sir

Washington March 25th 1848

I took the liberty of calling to day in the hopes of obtaining a private interview. My life in this city, a life of idleness to which I have not been accustomed, has become extremely irksome to me. My general health is apparantly good, but I have still some indications, which alarm me, and which deter me from entering as yet upon any carrear which would require steady physical or mental effort. The wound in my arm is still troublesome, and from present appearances I shall never recover the use of my hand.¹ I trust the mention of these matters which are personal to myself, will not be deemed impertinent by you, as you have always condescended to take an interest in me, and I have endeavored *God knows* with what assiduity to discharge my duty faithfully in every position in which you have placed me. In the Land office I worked until I affected my health. In the field I risked my life on every occasion to prove to the army and the country that I was worthy of the trust with

which you had honored me. Were it in my power I should do so again but if my services can be no longer useful, as I have no fortune to fall back upon I must turn my attention to some employment that may enable me to live honestly and honorably. I know I need about a year or two to recruit my health and recover my former vigor but I must submit to necessity and make the best of circumstances. While in the army I wish it possible to be employed, and as nothing else suggests itself, I would most respectfully lay before your Excellency the propriety of having permission to return to Tampico.² The command is an humble one, but it is a quiet one and is better than remaining here idle. If peace ensues the duty of commanding there would soon cease, and it would only devolve upon me to bring back the troops and the national property in safety. If the treaty³ fails I would be there on the spot to act under your future instructions. Of one thing be assured that whatever duty you assign me will be performed with fidelity. I mention this, because I fear that for some reason or other your confidence in me has somewhat abated. I feel more hurt at this thought than at any thing else which has ever occurred to me, particularly as I can call God to witness, that in Mexico I opposed every move which I thought calculated to bring discredit on your administration and that too at the risk of incurring the resentment of my superiors. There I incurred displeasure in being regarded as your staunch devoted personal and political friend, and here I apprehend, I am suspected of devotion to men, from whom I received no favor but what I won with my blood, and which they dare not refuse me. You know my pride, perhaps foolish pride of character and that nothing but the gratitude which I owe you and which I feel and acknowledge, would make me acknowledge that I feel hurt at apparent neglect, which indicates the abatement of your confidence. You know my views on the treaty. They were expressed freely to yourself in private,⁴ and I will say a strong portion of my feeling on that head originated in the belief that, the treaty was a conspiracy to force you into a sanction of the course of Trist Genl Scott. Perhaps I was wrong, but if so I was honestly wrong. I hope you will pardon this letter. It is the result of the warm feelings of my heart, and no neglect or abandonment can diminish those feelings. If I can be of any use to you in the way I suggest or any other way, I can only say that you command my services and my life.

JAS SHIELDS

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed locally and marked "*Confidential.*" From Polk's AE: received March 25, 1848.

1. After being shot through a lung at Cerro Gordo, Shields was shot through the left arm at Chapultepec. He returned to the United States in November 1847.

2. Shields had commanded troops at Tampico earlier in the war. Polk, after meeting with him at the Executive Mansion on March 27, 1848, appointed him governor of Tampico. Shields left Washington City on April 2. He was discharged on July 20.

3. Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

4. Polk's diary does not mention this conversation.

FROM ANDREW J. DONELSON

Dr. Sir.

[Berlin]¹ Sunday. 26' March. 1848

There is an abatement of the storm so far as collisions have been apprehended, or the personal safety of the Royal family put in jeopardy.² The King³ has paid a visit to Pottsdam, was received well by the portion of his army there, and was *huzzaed* by the people here, going & coming. Yet it is difficult to see how he can fulfil his promises if the German people persevere in their demands for universal suffrage in the selection of Electors for framing the new constitution. The part of Poland which fell to Prussia in the tri-partition wants a separate Government.⁴

The Congress at Dresden will not take place. Pottsdam was afterwards named as the place for its assemblage; but it is not likely that it will be deemed prudent to array in this manner the personal wishes of Monarchs as a check to the popular movements.⁵ It is too late now for compromises of this sort. There must be an entire modification of the Germanic Confederation, so as to make it a real central Government, and the local Governments must be remodelled with a view to that general object. The freedom of the press, the trial by Jury, the liberty of worship, and a legislative will springing from the right of suffrage as extended as ours is, are now conceded to all the German people. They must when put in practice produce the same results as with us, or if thy preserve the Monarchies, it will be under such limitations as will subject them to the public opinion of their states.

But can these mighty events occur without sowing the seeds of a counter revolution? And will not the *razeed*⁶ nobility be ready to fly to arms if Russia rejects the revolution.⁷ Already the German part of Denmark, Holstein Schleswick, makes a move towards independence, or as it would have been formerly termed revolt. All Poland too pants for an opportunity to revenge the wrongs done to her.

In such a state of things I regard the chances of peace as reduced to the almost hopeless prospect of inducing Russia quietly to recognise the reestablishment of the Polish Nation. Russia can bring an army of 100.000 of her *demi* savages from Asia, which it is her interest to have killed off. The Emperor⁸ is besides a man of great energy and genius. It is not probable that he will make a concession.

If we notice also the English press there is an evident disposition to deprecate the Republican principle, rather than to permit it to become the agent of reform. *England has mobs but they do not descend to repudiation, revolution, & republicanism!!* That is the sneer of the Times⁹—originating in a greater fear of American liberty than of a general European War.

On the whole I believe there will be war.

A J DONELSON

[P.S.] I keep Mr. B¹⁰ daily advised of events, but I do not know that my communications ever reach him.¹¹

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. Postmarked New York City, April 22. From Prosper M. Wetmore's¹² AES: received and forwarded April 22, 1848. From Polk's AE: received April 23, 1848; "Relates to the late Revolutionary movements & events, in Europe, & particularly in Germany."

1. Place identified through content analysis.

2. Violence had continued in Berlin since March 13 between protesters—mostly workers—and troops and new security commissions. On March 18, after Austria's revolution had begun, King Frederick William IV agreed to reconvene Prussia's United Diet, to end press censorship, and to consider reforming the German Confederation on a more centralized model. Further violence, however, broke out the same day after he refused Berliners' demand that he remove the army from the square and troops instead tried to remove the civilians. Barricades quickly went up and, the next day, the king ordered the troops' withdrawal, paid his respects to the dead revolutionaries, and established a Civic Guard of Berlin residents to protect the palace. After several days he reluctantly agreed to grant a constitution. On March 26 a large meeting of workers in the city issued demands, including universal manhood suffrage, which soon was granted. Later, the Pre-Parliament met in Frankfurt beginning March 31 and called for elections for an all-Germany Frankfurt Assembly, which first met in May and soon announced a provisional German government. In 1849, however, Prussia dissolved its new Constituent Assembly (which had followed the reconvened United Diet) and affirmed monarchical rule. Frederick William IV declined the German imperial crown that the Frankfurt Assembly offered him; that body eventually disbanded and expectations of a united Germany faded. Local revolutions likewise failed throughout the German states. Austria dissolved its own Constituent Assembly in 1849. Hesse-Kassel's and Württemberg's sovereigns dismissed their new liberal ministers in 1849 and 1850, respectively. Baden's revolution, a struggle between the reformist regime established in 1848 and republicans who rose against it in 1849, was ended that year by Prussian troops as Grand Duke Leopold I, who had fled Baden, returned to power.

3. Frederick William IV.

4. A series of agreements among Austria, Prussia, and Russia in 1772, 1793, and 1795 had divided the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth among those three

powers. Although small, semi-autonomous states had been created in 1807 and 1815, Poland did not reemerge as an independent nation-state until 1918. Still, Poles both in the three partitions and in exile elsewhere in Europe, especially France, long hoped to reestablish that state. On March 23, 1848, residents of Prussia's partition, the Grand Duchy of Posen, requested a "national reorganization" from Frederick William. On March 24 he agreed to the request; Prussia's government subsequently secured support from revolutionary France in case the effort led to war with Russia. Amid German opposition to Polish autonomy—even the king had second thoughts—and division between Poles and Germans in Posen itself, however, the grand duchy instead was divided into two units and the German-dominated one admitted to the German Confederation.

5. Early in 1848 Frederick William called a meeting of the leaders of German states to discuss reform of the German Confederation. He issued an official proclamation on March 14. The meeting was early on planned for March 24 at Dresden, Saxony, but its location was afterwards changed to Potsdam, Brandenburg. Amid ongoing revolutionary activity and the new Austrian government's decision not to participate, however, the meeting was canceled shortly before it was to begin. The confederation was dissolved in June. It was reestablished in 1850 but German unification was not achieved until 1871.

6. In a now-obsolete usage, "raze" meant "cut down" or "reduce."

7. Revolutionary activity did not spread to Russia. Czar Nicholas I, concerned that it would, readied his empire's western defenses as soon as he learned of the French republic. He also, in March 1848, tightened the empire's already-strict censorship and forbade Russians from leaving the empire. He did not, as some feared, launch a major counterrevolutionary assault on Europe, though he did send troops into Moldavia and Wallachia in the summer and help Austria defeat Hungary's revolution the next year.

8. Nicholas I.

9. The United Kingdom did not experience revolution in 1848, except a small and unsuccessful insurrection by Irish nationalists in the summer. The emphasized text has not been found in any article of the London *Times*. Donelson apparently paraphrases several articles about March 6 riots against a proposed income tax in Glasgow and London and about a mass meeting of Chartists, whose demands included universal manhood suffrage, planned for April 10 in London. The *Times* has been published since 1785.

10. James Buchanan.

11. Donelson wrote his postscript in the left margin.

12. Wetmore (1798–1876), born in Connecticut and raised in New York City, there became a merchant, a poet, and a writer for magazines. He also authored *Observations on the War with Mexico* (1847). Paymaster general of the state militia for many years, he served in the state legislature, 1835–36; as secretary of the New York Chamber of Commerce, 1843–49 (before becoming its vice president); and as navy agent at New York City, 1845–49. It is unknown why he received this letter.

FROM EZEKIEL P. McNEAL

Dear Sir

Bolivar [Tenn.]¹ March 27 1848

Enclosed I hand you my annuel statement of receipts & disbursements for your accts²—haveing been so successful as to collect eveything that is now due, shewing a balance in my hands of four hundred & sixty 5[. . .]/100 Dollars (\$460.5[. . .])³ subject to your order or disposal.

To day I sold the balance of your land near this place, say 56 acres at three Dollars per acre, for which I have receavd a note on a good man⁴ now due & bearing Interet, for \$168.00, and hope soon to collect it. This is a good sale, as the tract sold was so small that it was hard to find a purchaser at any price. Enclosed I hand you a Deed to sign for the close 57 acres.⁵

I cannot as yet report any sales in Dyer Co, nor have I given the Lease on the Fayette 500 Acre tract. A few days since I receavd a letter from Stephen Jackson⁶ in reply to mine of January, saying he wold come up in a short time to see me on the subjet, he haveing been prevented from comeing up sooner on account of sickness in his family.

E. P. McNEAL

ALS. DLC—JKP. Addressed to Washington City. From Polk's AEI: received April 7, 1848; in addition to summarizing the first two paragraphs of the letter, notes, from the enclosed statement, "Has pd. taxes on land of M. T. Polk's Heirs, & S. W. Polk's Heirs."

1. State identified from postmark and enclosed statement.

2. McNeal enclosed his statement of March 27, 1848, as Polk's agent. It covers April 1847–March 1848 and includes tax payments on the lands of Samuel Washington Polk's and Marshall T. Polk's heirs. ADS. DLC—JKP. Polk's AE to the statement:

M. T. Polk's rents for 1847	\$265.00
Deduct E. P. McNeal's fees & commissions	
for paying taxes & collecting rents—	<u>26.50</u>
Balance—	\$238.50

3. Closing parenthesis missing. McNeal's ambiguous digit (repeated in McNeal to Polk, July 1, 1848), probably "7" but possibly "1," seems to have confused Polk: the president cited this figure as "\$460.57" in Polk to McNeal, May 1, 1848, but as "\$460.51" in Polk to McNeal, May 10, 1848, and Polk to Vernon K. Stevenson, May 10, 1848. He approximated it at "\$460." in Polk to John Catron, May 22, 1848. Stevenson wrote "460 50/100" in Stevenson to Polk, May 31, 1848, and Polk repeated that figure in his AE. ALsS and ALsS, press copies. DLC—JKP.

4. Polk to McNeal, May 1, 1848, names the purchaser as "*Mr Nichol*," with the end of the surname possibly cut off the page. ALS, press copy. DLC—JKP.

(The Hardeman County, Tenn., deed index does not record this sale.) He likely was James Nicholson (c. 1815–1850s?), a Hardeman County farmer born in North Carolina.

5. Enclosure not found.

6. McNeal refers erroneously to Spencer Jackson, who was arranging to rent Fayette County, Tenn., land owned by Marshall T. Polk, Jr.

FROM CAVE JOHNSON

Dear Sir,

[Washington City] 29h March [1848]¹

Elijah Hise Esqr.—he prefers Bolivia of the South American missions but either will be satisfactory.²

The *Postal* arrangements have not yet been *published*.³

They report of Sec. of State is lying on your table.⁴

C. JOHNSON

ALS. DLC—JKP. From Polk's AE: received March 29, 1848.

1. Place identified through content analysis; year identified from Polk's AE.

2. See letter and notes in William M. Smyth to Polk, March 23, 1848, on the law of March 27 concerning U.S. diplomatic representation in Bolivia, Ecuador, and Guatemala.

3. Johnson presumably refers to existing or potential postal arrangements—procedures and rates for sending mail—with European states. In June 1847 First Assistant Postmaster General Selah R. Hobbie traveled to Europe to negotiate such arrangements. He quickly succeeded with the German states of Bremen, Prussia, Hanover, Brunswick, Saxony, Oldenburg, and Hamburg. Austria and those German states with postal services controlled by the Thurn und Taxis family proved more challenging. Hobbie also could not conclude an agreement with France owing to a dispute between the United States and the United Kingdom, through which mail between the United States and France passed, about overseas-transit charges. On that dispute, in which Hobbie and George Bancroft negotiated with British authorities between June 1847 and February 1848, see letter and notes in Bancroft to Polk, October 18, 1847. The U.S. Senate, on March 17, 1848, resolved to request copies of Bancroft's correspondence with the Britons. James Buchanan submitted the copies to Polk on March 24, and Polk submitted them and the secretary of state's cover letter to the Senate on March 27, on which date that body ordered these documents printed. See Senate Executive Document No. 30, 30th Congress, 1st Session.

4. Johnson may refer to a copy of Buchanan's cover letter of March 24, discussed in the preceding note, relating to a postal arrangement with the United Kingdom. Alternately, he may refer to a March 29 letter from Buchanan to Alphonse Pageot, French minister to the United States, or to a note to Polk about it. Pageot had written to the secretary of state earlier that day announcing his resignation due to King Louis Philippe's abdication on February 24.

According to Polk's diary, "Mr. Buchanan read to me an official note which he had prepared in reply. The Revolution in France is complete, being fully confirmed by the arrival of the Steamer Calidonia [i.e., *Caledonia*] at Boston two days ago. A provisional Government upon the basis of a Republic has succeeded the French Monarchy, suddenly and almost without bloodshed. It is the most remarkable, as well as the most important event of modern times." Buchanan's complimentary note of acknowledgment to Pageot has been published in *WJB*—8, pp. 30–31.

CALENDAR

N.B. Items entered in *italic* type have been published or briefed in the Correspondence Series.

1847

[c. Aug 1847]

1 Aug

From Shah copee et al.

From William H. Brockenbrough. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces George S. Hawkins, of the Florida Supreme Court, who can report on Florida politics; reports that William D. Moseley is well.

2 Aug

3 Aug

From David Levy Yulee.

From Anonymous, signed “I am the prince of pease.” AL. DLC–JKP. War of 1812 veteran in Peoria, N.Y., expresses “Indignation and contempt” for the Mexican War’s “desruction of human life”; warns that “a friend” will destroy Washington City unless Polk replies or ends it now; offers to negotiate a peace.

[c. 3 Aug 1847]

From Anonymous, signed “Junius of Ohio.” AL. DLC–JKP. New Jerusalem, Ohio, resident accuses Polk of hypocrisy for vetoing the French Spoliation Bill in 1846, thereby “denying the righgt of our citizens to claim indemnity,” but going to war against Mexico to force the payment of indemnities; predicts Americans’ “polk-ing Polk out of power.” From Polk’s AE: “A foolish letter.”

3 Aug

From Leonard P. Cheatham et al. ANS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Sylvanus E. Benson to Polk, August 13, 1847. Tennesseans, including William H. Polk, seek an appointment for former Nashville *Union* clerk Hugh F. Jebb. Aaron V. Brown added his signed concurrence on August 5.

3 Aug

From [Andrew Lane], signed “Amor Patriæ.”

- 3 Aug To John T. Leigh. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Notes receipt of Leigh’s letter of July 22; encloses a letter of appointment to John R. Eggleston, of Mississippi, as a midshipman (not found); anticipates that son Armistead C. Leigh will attend to Polk’s letter of July 22 to John.
- 3 Aug From William M. Smyth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for a meeting before he returns to New Orleans this week.
- 3 Aug From Joseph White. ALS. DLC–JKP. Baltimore Democrat introduces Cincinnati Democrat John Creagh, who is in Washington City seeking an appointment for an unnamed soldier.
- 4 Aug From James Edmonston. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former Mexican War soldier, about to leave for army headquarters in Mexico, offers to bear dispatches to Winfield Scott or Nicholas P. Trist.
- 4 Aug From Leonard S. Robey. ALS. DLC–JKP. Washington City laborer asks for a job, citing Polk’s expressed wish in 1845 to give him one.
- 4 Aug From Mayer B. G. Schmetzer. ALS. DLC–JKP. Danish immigrant and Pennsylvania Democrat asks for a meeting today.
- 4 Aug From William M. Smyth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks for a letter to William L. Marcy recommending him as bearer of dispatches to Mexico, having learned since speaking with Polk this morning that others may apply.
- [5 Aug 1847] From Jesse D. Bright. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. senator from Indiana reports that the Senate Military Affairs Committee would approve a brevet promotion to captain for Lt. James Tilton, of the voltigeurs. See also L, typed copy. InU–Li.
- [6, 13, 20, or 27 Aug 1847] From William H. Russell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Missouri man asks for a meeting this morning to tell Polk “of California affairs.”
- 6 Aug From William J. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Second assistant postmaster general reports details he learned from George W. Kendall of the arrangement for communications to Cave Johnson from New Orleans; reports having learned, apparently from Thomas Ritchie, of Virginia Democrat Richard K. Meade’s election to the U.S. House.
- 6 Aug From Thomas Gatewood. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former naval officer for the district of Norfolk and Portsmouth, Va., asserts that Polk was misled into removing him from office; encloses a pamphlet on the topic (not found).
- 6 Aug From Henry Horn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces his son, Philadelphia lawyer James Henry Horn.
- 7 Aug From Charles P. Bunnell. ALS. MiU–C. Butternuts, N.Y., merchant seeks an army appointment.

- 7 Aug *To William O. Butler.*
- 7 Aug *To Levin H. Coe.*
- 7 Aug From Nicholas D. Coleman. ALS. DLC–JKP. Vicksburg, Miss., lawyer introduces William L. Ayers, of Vicksburg.
- [7 Aug 1847] From John Redman Coxe. ALS. DLC–JKP. Corresponding secretary reminds Polk of the circular (not found) he sent six weeks ago announcing Polk’s election to honorary membership in the Union Philosophical Society of Dickinson College, Carlisle, Penn., and solicits a donation to help build a new society hall.
- 7 Aug From Henry Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Lexington, Ky., Democrat introduces Democrat and former Louisiana legislator Thomas Green Davidson.
- 7 Aug From George W. Thompson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former lieutenant of Company K of the First Massachusetts Infantry Regiment explains that the army’s decision to transfer his men to other companies, under officers they had not chosen, forced him to resign his commission; asks for a job in the port of Boston; encloses a letter from Caleb Cushing to Thompson (not found).
- [c. 8 Aug 1847] From William L. McCalla. PL. Clipping headed “For the Daily Sun.” DLC–JKP. In this public letter—clipping mailed to Polk—a follow-up to that in the Philadelphia *Daily Sun* of August 7, repeats his claim that Polk appointed Jesuits as army chaplains to serve as spies; claims Jesuits “are educated for such purposes” but do not share Polk’s “interests”; questions Polk’s Presbyterianism and honesty. Polk’s AE: “He is a bigot, and a base slanderer.”
- 9 Aug *From James Buchanan.*
- 9 Aug *From Thomas B. Childress.*
- 9 Aug *To Thomas B. Childress.*
- 9 Aug From James L. Edwards. ALS. DLC–JKP. Commissioner of pensions returns Uri Manly to Polk, June 11, 1847; reports having no record of a pension claim by William Walter’s heirs, about which their lawyer sought information; suggests checking the office of the clerk of the U.S. House.
- 9 Aug From John Nelson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in John S. Sellman to Polk, August 10, 1847. John Tyler’s attorney general introduces Sellman, a Democratic Maryland state senator.
- 9 Aug From Ansleum T. Nicks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Fayetteville, Tenn., postmaster reports that Aaron V. Brown beat Neill S. Brown in Lincoln County, 2,400 to 677, and will probably be reelected governor, and that Mexican War veteran and Democrat Coleman A. McDaniel was elected to the state house, showing that the county supports the war.

- 9 Aug To John Henry Sherburne. AN, press copy. DLC–JKP. Thanks the author for the copy of his *Tourist's Guide, or Pencillings in England and on the Continent; with the Expenses, Conveyances, Distances, Sights, Hotels, etc. and Important Hints to the Tourist* (1847) that he sent with his letter of August 3 (not found). See also AN, draft. DLC–JKP. On same sheet as Polk's notes about William L. McCalla (1847).
- 9 Aug From William M. Smyth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Having been appointed bearer of dispatches, asks to be sent to Mexico as soon as possible due to his need for money and wish to return to his family; seeks a meeting.
- 9 Aug From Edward D. Tippet. ALS. DLC–JKP. Washington City inventor defends his claim in his last letter (not found) that he is a prophet; cites his dream, told in an earlier letter (not found), predicting Polk's presidency and the Mexican War; asserts that the United States will acquire all of Mexico and that the United Kingdom, which has a secret arrangement with Mexico, will lose Canada if it interferes; proposes that Polk commission someone to write a primer on U.S. government for Mexicans and Americans.
- [c. 10 Aug 1847] *From Anonymous, signed "W P—."*
- 10 Aug From Adoniram Chandler et al. PC. DLC–JKP. Managers of the American Institute invite Polk to "The twentieth celebration of American Industry and the Arts," in New York City on October 5–14; enclose the printed program.
- 10 Aug *From John J. Hughes.*
- 10 Aug From John S. Sellman. ALS. DLC–JKP. Requests a meeting today; encloses John Nelson to Polk, August 9, 1847.
- 10 Aug *To Vernon K. Stevenson.*
- 10 Aug *From James H. Thomas.*
- 11 Aug From Edmund Burke. ALS. DLC–JKP. Returns Peter Burum to Polk, July 21, 1847, with all available reports of the commissioner of patents for Burum's Sunday school near Rock Island, Tenn.; promises to send Polk John C. Frémont's *Report of the Exploring Expedition to the Rocky Mountains in the Year 1842, and to Oregon and North California in the Years 1843–44* (1845) for the school.
- 11 Aug From Solomon W. Downs. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. senator from Louisiana introduces Thomas Green Davidson.
- 11 Aug *From George Felix.*
- 11 Aug *From Robert P. Flenniken.*
- 11 Aug *From Jeremiah George Harris.*
- [c. 11 Aug 1847] From Sylvester S. Southworth. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City journalist and inspector of revenue encloses his

- August 6 letter in the Boston *Post* (under pseudonym "John Smith, Jr., of Arkansas"), defending Polk's honesty and "discretion" against the "liar" William L. McCalla and accusing members of Chicago's River and Harbor Convention of seeking federal money for "land speculations."
- 11 Aug From Charles Thomas. ALS. DLC-JKP. Major in Quartermaster General's Office encloses H. H. Harrison to Polk, July 30, 1847, which steamer captain Harrison sent under cover to Thomas S. Jesup.
- 12 Aug From John O. Bradford. ALS. DLC-JKP. Navy purser in Wilmington, Del., encloses a letter to William H. Polk, possibly William A. Sparks's of July 29 about William's marriage and Sparks's wish for a better diplomatic post than the consulate at Venice.
- 12 Aug From Leonard P. Cheatham. ALS. DLC-JKP. Recommends former Nashville post office clerk Edwin Dibrell for a job.
- [c. 12 Aug 1847] From [George Felix].
- 13 Aug From Sylvanus E. Benson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Second Auditor's Office clerk encloses and agrees with Leonard P. Cheatham et al. to Polk, August 3, 1847, and possibly other letters recommending Hugh F. Jebb.
- 13 Aug To *Jeremiah George Harris*.
- 13 Aug From George P. Ihrie. ALS. DLC-JKP. Court-martialed U.S. Military Academy student and future Civil War general seeks reinstatement.
- 13 Aug From Edwin Irwin. ALS. DLC-JKP. Eton, England, poet presents his poem about George Washington, "Irwin's Washington, Or the Star of the West."
- 13 Aug From David Levy Yulee. ALS. DLC-JKP. Notes having given his letter to Polk of July 28 to Gen. Charles Byrne, of the Florida militia; reiterates that Polk should promptly fire Samuel J. Carr, storekeeper of the Pikesville, Md., arsenal.
- 14 Aug From *Thomas B. Childress*.
- 14 Aug From *David B. Fowler*.
- 14 Aug From Richard W. Gardner. ALS. DLC-JKP. Repeats his request of fall 1846 (not found) for a job in the South or West; attributes Democrats' electoral losses in Tennessee to the party's strategic errors; stresses his role in brother John A. Gardner's unsuccessful campaign for the U.S. House.
- 15 Aug From Jefferson Davis. ALS. DNA-RG 107. Recommends the appointment as army assistant surgeon of James D. Caulfield, who has filled that role in the First Mississippi Rifle Regiment and, now, the Virginia Infantry Regiment.

- 15 Aug From Thomas D. Moseley (or Mosely). ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee introduces Middle Tennessee cavalry captain John F. Goodner.
- 15 Aug From Philip F. Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Maryland Democratic gubernatorial candidate proclaims the innocence of Samuel J. Carr, charged with “appropriating Government funds to his own use.”
- 15 Aug From John S. Young. ANS. DLC–JKP. Tennessee secretary of state introduces John F. Goodner; asks Polk to give Goodner a letter to James L. Edwards regarding his company’s bounty claims.
- 16 Aug From Samuel R. Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Tennessee lieutenant colonel introduces John F. Goodner; asks Polk to help Goodner with his bounty claims and recommends him for appointment in the regular army.
- 16 Aug From Thomas Fitnam. ALS. DLC–JKP. Washington City reporter quotes in full John Tyler’s letter of December 15, 1846, to Fitnam about patronage seekers’ surrounding high officeholders, which he mentioned in a letter of August 14 (not found).
- 16 Aug From Solomon Hillen, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former Baltimore mayor proclaims Samuel J. Carr’s innocence, attributing the accusations against him to “personal enmity” and desire for his job.
- 16 Aug From Alfred O. P. Nicholson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk’s recollection of a settlement Polk superintended between Nicholson and Rutherford County, Tenn., farmer William McKee, because they disagree about whether Nicholson owes McKee \$250; grumbles about Tennessee’s election.
- 16 Aug From William M. Smyth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk of his traveling to New York; hopes Polk will be able to send him to Mexico with messages when he returns to Washington City on August 26.
- 17 Aug From James L. Edwards. ALS. DLC–JKP. Explains that he rejected Mexican War veteran Abner S. Harwood’s pension claim because Harwood was discharged early and not for reason of disability; returns Edwards to Harwood, June 11, 1847, explaining the decision, and Harwood to Polk, July 27, 1847, appealing it.
- 18 Aug From Ransom H. Gillet. ALS. DLC–JKP. Informs Polk, “The tables you requested will be completed to morrow”; possibly refers to a corrected report on available government funds or a report on the War Department’s balances.
- 18 Aug From Ezekiel P. McNeal.
- 18 Aug From John Y. Mason. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses letters of this date to Mason from George Gibson, Surgeon

- Henry L. Heiskell, Nathan Towson, and Charles Thomas, estimating the expenses of the Subsistence, Medical, Pay, and Quartermaster's Departments, respectively, of the War Department, from now until the meeting of Congress; promises to bring Polk the statement for this fiscal year once the Second Comptroller's Office completes it tomorrow.
- 18 Aug *To John Y. Mason.*
- 18 Aug From Thomas C. Sharp et al. ANS. DNA-RG 107. Illinois constitutional convention members and officers recommend Mount Carmel, Ill., lawyer Victor B. Ball for a lieutenantcy, assistant commissaryship, or assistant quartermastership in the regular army.
- 18 Aug From Charles A. Wickliffe. ALS. DLC-JKP. John Tyler's postmaster general advises against a federal appointment for Benjamin Rowan Hardin, Kentucky commissioner of deeds for Texas, one of Polk's "bitter revilers."
- 19 Aug *From William S. Cassedy.*
- 19 Aug From John Dinwiddie. ALS. DLC-JKP. Columbus, Ind., Democrat urges Polk to run for reelection; seeks a commission to raise a company to protect travelers on the Oregon Trail.
- 19 Aug From Thomas W. Ligon. ALS. DNA-RG 156. Maryland congressman withdraws his August 17 recommendation (not found) of Lawrence Byrne, a physician at the Pikesville, Md., arsenal, as storekeeper of that arsenal owing to "much difference of opinion . . . in the [Baltimore] County." From E in an unknown hand: forwarded to Ordnance Office, War Department.
- 19 Aug From John F. Snyder. ALS. DLC-JKP. Late Indiana congressman Adam W. Snyder's son seeks Polk's autograph.
- 20 Aug From Julia H. Anderson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Pensacola, Fla., navy agent Walker Anderson's daughter solicits a navy pursership for her brother Cameron.
- 20 Aug From Adam Furgason. ALS. DLC-JKP. Carthage, Miss., Democrat, recently robbed and widowed, asks to borrow three hundred dollars so he can return home from Holly Springs, Miss.
- 20 Aug From Stanhope R. Munford. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former Indian Department clerk in the War Department attributes his problems to drinking; asks to borrow ten dollars to return home to Virginia.
- 21 Aug *From Edward Harden.*
- 21 Aug From John A. Mairs. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports that Polk's slaves are healthy; that his cotton, corn, and livestock are doing well; and that the slaves have cleared and disked land and begun preparing winter clothing.

- 22 Aug *From Robert Wickliffe.*
- 23 Aug From John C. Brooke. ALS. DLC–JKP. San Augustine, Tex., farmer, denied a job in the post office, complains that Polk has not appointed Texans to federal offices, even within the state; suggests Texas’s secession from the United States; opines that the Whigs will win Texas’s elections.
- 23 Aug *To Aaron V. Brown.*
- 23 Aug *From Joseph Hall.*
- 23 Aug *From Joseph L. Williams.*
- 23 Aug From McClintock Young. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a telegram of today from Robert J. Walker to Young discussing the War Department’s financial crisis and today’s transfer of money from New York City to New Orleans for the department, and announcing Walker’s renewed health and plan to leave for Washington City tomorrow.
- 24 Aug *To Aaron V. Brown.*
- 24 Aug *From Charles F. Fletcher.*
- 24 Aug From Charles Shaler. ALS. DLC–JKP. Pittsburgh lawyer introduces Mississippi Episcopal minister Alexander McLeod.
- 24 Aug From William G. Smith. ALS. DLC–JKP. East Liverpool, Ohio, landowner repeats his request of June 28, 1847, for a donation to a new seminary in East Liverpool.
- 25 Aug *From Henry Horn.*
- 26 Aug From Ransom H. Gillet. LS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a copy of former Pennsylvania congressman John Sergeant’s letter of August 23 to Gillet, accepting the proposed payment for arbitrating the title to Pea Patch Island, Del., between the federal government and James Humphrey.
- [26 Aug 1847] *From Cave Johnson.*
- 26 Aug From John Y. Mason. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses two letters from Col. Thomas B. W. Stockton, of Wisconsin (not found); recommends that Polk meet with Stockton about calling his regiment into service.
- 26 Aug From Thomas Parkin Scott. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Baltimore and Ohio Railroad director recommends Lawrence Byrne as storekeeper of the Pikesville, Md., arsenal. From E in an unknown hand: forwarded to War Department.
- 26 Aug *From William H. Stiles.*
- [26 Aug 1847] *From Jane Maria Eliza McManus Storms.*
- 26 Aug From McClintock Young. LS. DLC–JKP. Notes that the Treasury Department transferred money to New Orleans at the War Department’s request, but that “requisitions and estimates of the War Department” have been drafted on New York City “whenever practicable.” From Polk’s AE: “I requested that a fuller . . . Report should be made.”

- 27 Aug *From Charles B. Cotter.*
- 27 Aug From [Andrew M'Makin]. AN. DLC–JKP. Philadelphia *Saturday Courier* editor asks that the Washington *Union* notice the enclosed editorial from his newspaper, “A Question of Etiquette,” criticizing Winfield Scott’s attitude toward Nicholas P. Trist.
- 27 Aug From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that the Treasury Department has made two transfers to New Orleans and will transfer the remaining \$600,000 on September 15; notes that McClintock Young is writing “a full report.”
- 27 Aug From McClintock Young. LS. DLC–JKP. Reports that the Treasury Department has transferred funds to New Orleans for the War Department through three banks and that the remaining \$600,000 payment is due on September 15.
- 28 Aug From William Albright. ANS. DLC–JKP. Charlbury, England, Quaker asserts that God has thwarted the U.S. Army because starting the Mexican War was wrong.
- 28 Aug From Thomas Green Davidson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for his “kindness”; plans to leave for Louisiana tomorrow; recommends “young Breed” to replace the late Louisiana adjutant Yves Guyot.
- 28 Aug *From Frances H. Lanphear and Jane Tweedy.*
- 29 Aug *From Edmund P. Gaines.*
- 29 Aug *From Joel Turrill.*
- 30 Aug From Josiah N. Armstrong. ALS. DLC–JKP. Robert Armstrong’s son applies for a quartermastership in Mexico; asks Polk to write Josiah in New York City; reports that Robert will reach America on September 5.
- 30 Aug *To William O. Butler.*
- 30 Aug *From Barbara Ellen Berry Hume.*
- 30 Aug *To Ezekiel P. McNeal.*
- 30 Aug From John Y. Mason. L, copy, in Robert W. Young’s hand. DNA–RG 45. Describes the dispute between Cdre. Thomas ap C. Jones and the government over whether he should receive on-duty or off-duty pay for five months of 1841; encloses copies of the Navy Department’s letters to Jones of April 26 and September 23, 1841, and returns Jones to Polk, August 26, 1847 (none found).
- 30 Aug To Alfred O. P. Nicholson. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. To Nicholson’s letter of August 16, Polk responds that he thinks, but is uncertain, that the note for \$250 was insurance until William McKee could collect a claim on Middle Tennessean Thomas Samuel Oliphant’s estate, and hence Nicholson does not owe him the money; suggests Nicholson review documents regarding the transactions.

- 30 Aug From Elijah F. Purdy et al. ALS. DNA–RG 107. New York City men recommend Charles Ackerman, of that city, for an army commission. New York City law publisher David Banks’s signed concurrence follows Purdy et al.’s letter.
- 31 Aug *From Anonymous, signed “Ned. Bucket.”*
- 31 Aug From Anonymous, signed “O. K.” AL. DLC–JKP. Columbia, Tenn., resident predicts that the Whigs, having won Tennessee’s governorship and legislature, will refuse jobs to Democrats because Polk has refused them to Whigs; argues that, with the Mexican War, Polk has “brot disgrace on the Cuntry” and will destroy the Democratic party; claims, apparently falsely, “Dick Moore is dead” (both Richard B. Moore and Richard Moore of Maury County, Tenn., lived well beyond 1847).
- 31 Aug *From William J. Gamble.*
- 31 Aug From Daniel T. Jenks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to have Robert J. Walker “immediately” confirm Jenks’s appointment in the Philadelphia Customs House.
- 31 Aug From Gorham Parks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Consul at Rio de Janeiro praises former minister Henry A. Wise and legation secretary Robert M. Walsh; worries that Minister David Tod has a hard job because Brazil’s ministers “mistake kindness and forbearance for fear and submission” and value “procrastination.”
- 31 Aug *From Richard Rush.*
- 1 Sept From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that mail arrived today at Richmond, Va., but “nothing further from the army,” and that George V. Hebb wishes “to return to Mexico, as Commissary or Qr. Master.”
- 1 Sept From John Y. Mason. ALS. ViHi–MF. Encloses a letter to John from Dr. George Mason, his brother (not found); requests “to be absent for a few days” due to father Edmunds Mason’s poor health.
- 1 Sept From Thomas J. Rusk. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. senator from Texas recommends Dr. Josephus F. Griffin as army assistant surgeon, Leonard Randal, of Texas, having declined the appointment.
- 1 Sept *From Romulus M. Saunders.*
- 1 Sept From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Supports the “wishes” of bearer Philip F. Thomas, who visits Polk to discuss “Mr Frick” (likely prominent Baltimore Democrat William Frick); indicates relevance to Thomas’s gubernatorial and Robert M. McLane’s congressional elections. From Polk’s AE, probably erroneously: “Augt. 31st 1847.”
- 2 Sept From Anonymous, signed “Columbus.” AL. DLC–JKP. Cincinnati resident recommends, to hasten the end of

- the Mexican War, that the U.S. Army buy supplies from Mexicans with drafts payable at the war's end.
- 2 Sept *To James Buchanan.*
- 2 Sept *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 2 Sept To Elias N. Conway. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Responding to the Arkansas state auditor's letter of June 15, encloses receipts for newspaper subscriptions; thanks Conway for paying the taxes on Polk's Arkansas lands and asks him to pay them each year until he can sell the lands.
- 2 Sept From William S. Jenkins. ALS. DLC–JKP. Petersburg, Ky., physician seeks appointment as surgeon in one of the two new Kentucky regiments; refers to recommendations from this spring on file in the War Department.
- 2 Sept *To Jane Knox Polk.*
- 2 Sept *To James H. Thomas.*
- 2 Sept From Richard M. Young. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that Upper Sandusky, Ohio, merchant Joseph McCutchen has repeated his charges against Upper Sandusky land office register Robert McKelly in two letters, and that Young will resubmit the case to Polk once McCutchen provides his new evidence.
- 3 Sept *From Alfred Balch.*
- 3 Sept From Caleb Cushing. ALS, draft. DLC–WWC. Recommends Capt. S. P. Webb, assistant quartermaster at Matamoros, for reappointment and promotion.
- 3 Sept From George Hulls. ALS. DLC–JKP. Cincinnati engineer suggests tactics for attacking or defending a location.
- 3 Sept From James Leonard. ALS. DLC–JKP. Poughkeepsie, N.Y., Whig claims many want Polk to send a large force to Mexico to end the war quickly; worries Polk has been "deceived by the Mexicans."
- 3 Sept *To John A. Mairs.*
- 3 Sept *To Vernon K. Stevenson.*
- 4 Sept *From James H. Hammond.*
- 4 Sept *From Frederick P. Stanton.*
- 5 Sept From Anonymous. AL. DLC–JKP. Accomack County, Va., resident reports that Virginia congressman Thomas H. Bayly shot a man and was banned from the county; describes local dislike for Bayly because he sided with Northern Methodists in his election this spring and tried to replace the county surveyor with his abolitionist brother-in-law.
- 5 Sept From Richard M. Young. LS. DLC–JKP. Reports on the General Land Office's activities in July and August, including payment for former Indian lands and distribution of army land bounties.

- [c. 6 Sept 1847] From Robert M. McLane. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces New York City lawyer Philip Hamilton, his brother-in-law.
- 7 Sept From John M. Jackson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Moulton, Ala., farmer outlines the debts of Polk’s aunt, Moulton widow Naomi Knox Leetch; wishes that “some more fortunate relative” would advance money to help her.
- 8 Sept *To Aaron V. Brown.*
- 9 Sept From Anonymous, signed “A, B, C.” AL. DLC–JKP. New York City Democrat urges Polk to stop all banks from issuing paper money, thereby helping workers accumulate more specie and raising the value of treasury notes; asserts that Whigs aim only to preserve paper money and will promote nullification in New York.
- 9 Sept From William J. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends the retention of “young Dr Brown of Lawrenceburgh Indiana” with Col. Willis A. Gorman’s Indiana regiment, if he is there as surgeon or assistant surgeon; notes Assistant Surgeon William “Fosdick is at home.”
- 9 Sept *To Andrew H. Green.*
- 9 Sept To Walter G. Kearney. L, copy, in Washington Curran Whitthorne’s hand. DLC–JKP. Accepts honorary membership in the Union Literary Society of Centenary College, Jackson, La., announced in the corresponding secretary’s letter of January 23.
- 9 Sept *From Robert Patterson.*
- 9 Sept To J. Sappington Pearson. L, copy, in Washington Curran Whitthorne’s hand. DLC–JKP. Thanks the corresponding secretary for his letter of May 19 announcing Polk’s honorary membership in the Philomathian Society of Cumberland College, Lebanon, Tenn.; notes Polk’s “deep interest” in Tennessee’s “advancement.”
- 9 Sept To John F. Reinmund and J. H. Walker. L, copy, in Washington Curran Whitthorne’s hand. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges honorary membership in the Philosophian Society of Wittenberg College, Springfield, Ohio, announced in the corresponding secretaries’ letter of March 19. See also AL, draft. DLC–JKP.
- 9 Sept To Middleton G. Singleton. L, copy, in Washington Curran Whitthorne’s hand. DLC–JKP. Thanks the corresponding secretary for his letter of July 24 announcing Polk’s honorary membership in the Athenaeum Society of the University of Missouri, Columbia.
- 9 Sept *To James N. Smith.*
- 10 Sept *From Thomas H. Benton.*
- 10 Sept *From Aaron V. Brown.*

- 10 Sept From John W. Childress. ALS. DNA–RG 107. Sarah Childress Polk’s brother recommends Stephen E. Jamison, of Millersburg, Tenn., for a quartermastership in the new Tennessee regiment. Polk’s AE: “War.”
- 10 Sept
[c. 10 Sept 1847] From Joseph Hall et al. PNS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Hall to Polk, September 10, 1847. Eighteen Pennsylvania Democrats “request the removal of JAMES PAGE from the Collectorship of the Port of Philadelphia,” he having made undesirable appointments and hurt the party.
- 10 Sept From Nathaniel Saxton to Thomas Ritchie and James K. Polk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Flemington, N.J., lawyer with pseudonym “Anglo Saxon,” in a letter to Ritchie, describes the dangers of medicines calomel and jalap and accuses Flemington printer and Whig Henry C. Buffington of stealing someone’s manuscript; in a postscript to Polk, to whom he addresses the letter, expresses hope for its publication.
- 10 Sept From John F. Stump. ALS. DLC–JKP. Later enclosed in Polk to Robert J. Walker, November 29, 1847. Unemployed Philadelphian asks for a job, preferably in Philadelphia, citing his service to the Democratic party in Tennessee and Pennsylvania and noting his unsuccessful March 1847 letter (not found) seeking the consulship at Pernambuco, Brazil; urges Polk to seek reelection.
- 10 Sept To James H. Walker.
- 11 Sept From William O. Butler.
- 11 Sept From John McKeon et al.
- 11 Sept From Robert M. McLane. ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses correspondence of yesterday with John Y. Mason about Baltimore physician Wakeman D. Bryarly’s appointment to the Maryland battalion; recommends appointment of James McHenry Boyd, former legation secretary to the United Kingdom, as a field officer therein.
- 11 Sept From William Henry Norris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Baltimore lawyer thanks Polk for pardoning his brother, Henry P. Norris, who had been convicted of manslaughter and imprisoned by the army in Tampico.
- 12 Sept From Richard French. ALS. DNA–RG 107. Kentucky congressman recommends Paris, Ky., Baptist minister George Giddings Goss for a chaplaincy in one of the new Kentucky regiments. From Washington Curran Whitthorne’s AE: referred to and answered on September 23 by War Department.
- 12 Sept From Hopkins L. Turney.

- 13 Sept From Joseph Lyon. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former inspector of revenue for the port of New York seeks a reply to his two previous letters (not found).
- 13 Sept From Mayer B. G. Schmetzer. ALS. DLC–JKP. Laments the wrongs done to him and asks for the consulship in the West Indies that John Tyler promised him.
- 14 Sept *From Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 16 Sept From Moses McClean. Auction listing for ALS of unknown current location. Former Pennsylvania congressman recommends Philadelphia painter William McIlvaine, Jr., to replace the late Lt. Washington Meads in the Eleventh Infantry Regiment.
- 17 Sept *From Aaron V. Brown.*
- 18 Sept *From Mary Berkley Childress.*
- 19 Sept *From James Buchanan.*
- 20 Sept From Moses Chamberlain, Jr. AN. DLC–JKP. Concord, N.H., collector seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 20 Sept From John W. Ford. ALS. TU. McMinnville, Tenn., postmaster recommends Tennessee veteran James D. Priest for a quartermastership in a new regiment; “Col Campbell, you will see by the enclosed, has recommended him for the appointment of Captain” (not found; may refer to Robert Campbell, Jr.).
- 21 Sept *From Jessie Benton Frémont.*
- 22 Sept From Enoch Steen. ALS. DLC–JKP. Missourian dragoon captain seeks a transfer for his son, Lt. Alexander E. Steen, from the Twelfth Infantry Regiment to Company F of the First Dragoon Regiment; endorses James Buchanan for the Democratic presidential nomination, arguing that he would defeat Zachary Taylor.
- 24 and 25 Sept *To Aaron V. Brown.*
- 25 Sept From Peter V. Daniel. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. Supreme Court associate justice recounts the financial ruin of the late Thomas L. L. Brent, once chargé d’affaires to Portugal, whose Michigan family will soon be homeless; solicits a job for Brent’s son, Henry L.
- 25 Sept *To Howell Taylor, Jr.*
- 25 Sept *From James H. Walker.*
- 26 Sept From John B. Hays. ALS. DLC–JKP. Polk’s brother-in-law, a Columbia, Tenn., physician, recommends Calvin Harvey Walker as army assistant surgeon.
- 27 Sept From Edmund Burke. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Dr. Samuel Lilly, of Lambertville, N.J.
- 27 Sept From John S. H. Fogg. ALS. DLC–JKP. South Berwick, Maine, collector requests Polk’s autograph for “a Literary Institution.”

- 28 Sept From Gerardus C. King. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City youth seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 29 Sept From William Davidson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former North Carolina congressman thanks Polk for appointing his grandson, Joseph Davidson Blake, a midshipman. Published in ULNCP–Ju, pp. 250–51.
- 29 Sept From Crawford W. Hall et al. ANS. Private collection of George E. Webb, Jr. Recommend Robert D. Powel for appointment in the army’s “provision or pay departments.”
From William A. Scott.
- 30 Sept
[c. Oct 1847] From Emily Ward Burnett. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York woman seeks for her husband, Col. Ward Benjamin Burnett, the late Enos D. Hopping’s brigadier generalship.
From Duff Green.
- 1 Oct From John T. Leigh. ALS. ViHi–MF. Encloses Mrs. (possibly Fanny) Eggleston to Leigh, September 13, 1847, asking to postpone son John R. Eggleston’s examination at the U.S. Naval Academy while he prepares, and a letter of September 13 to Leigh from his daughter, likely Catherine Leigh Powell, about family and agriculture, written on the same sheet as the other enclosure.
From John A. Mairs.
- 1 Oct
[2 Oct 1847] *From Cave Johnson.*
- 5 Oct *From Cave Johnson.*
- 6 Oct From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports multiple recommendations, in William L. Marcy’s possession, of “Revd Mr. Peeples of Columbia K.y.” (probably Benjamin Peeples) for a job; reports that Peeples would accept a position as bearer of dispatches to the army or Indian subagent.
From Stephen Adams.
- 7 Oct From Job Mann. ALS. DLC–JKP. Pennsylvania congressman seeks a lieutenancy for his nephew, Private William F. Mann.
From William L. Marcy.
- 7 Oct From William M. Smyth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for appointing him bearer of dispatches to Winfield Scott; recommends Robert Armstrong’s appointment to the army in Mexico, ideally as Scott’s replacement, and seeks a military office under Armstrong.
From Edmund Burke.
- 9 Oct From Caleb Cushing. ALS, draft. DLC–WWC. Commends William H. Polk; announces Cushing’s appointing him, in thanks to the president, volunteer aide-de-camp and acting inspector general for Cushing’s troops.

- 9 Oct From Charles F. Fletcher. ANS. DLC–JKP. Refutes the argument in the *Washington Daily National Intelligencer* of October 7 (which quoted the *New York Journal of Commerce*, which in turn quoted Zachary Taylor) that the U.S. Army should “withdraw” to “a line” in Mexico; advises, instead, holding captured Mexican “cities as hostages” and taxing them.
- 9 Oct *From Jacob L. Martin.*
- 10 Oct From Sarah Smith Stafford. ALS. DLC–JKP. Washington City teacher of navy officers’ children, visiting the Executive Mansion at brother Samuel B. Stafford’s request, asks about Polk’s health and expresses hope for its “improvement.”
- 11 Oct From Sidney Breese. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Samuel Anderson, of DuPage County, Ill., to replace Amos J. Bruce as Indian agent at Fort Snelling, an appointment that would “satisfy the democrats of the north”; claims Illinois can raise at least two more regiments.
- 11 Oct From William Gibbs McNeill. ALS. DLC–JKP. Concerned that Polk has denied him a military appointment because he commanded Rhode Island’s militia during the Dorr Rebellion in 1842, asserts that he did so only to restore peace and democratic rule.
- 11 Oct *From Thomas J. Read.*
- 12 Oct From Frederick Philipse Wheelock. ALS. DLC–JKP. Passed midshipman thanks Polk for “restoring me to the Naval Service.”
- 14 Oct *From George Abernethy.*
- 15 Oct From William J. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a postscript (not found) about the Mexican War from a letter by Indiana governor James Whitcomb, who “will use the same strong language in his message.”
- 15 Oct From Edward M. D. Roe. ALS. DLC–JKP. Man in Washington City wishes Polk “well,” having read “in a public paper” that he is “unwell.”
- 16 Oct *To James Buchanan.*
- 17 Oct *From Vernon K. Stevenson.*
- 18 Oct *From George Bancroft.*
- 18 Oct *To Aaron V. Brown.*
- 18 Oct From Frances H. Williamson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Washington City woman asks Polk to appoint Second Auditor’s Office chief clerk Josiah F. Polk, who is ill and has three sisters to support, as U.S. marshal for the District of Columbia in place of Alexander Hunter.
- 20 Oct From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Christian H. Sand and Conrad W. Faber, Sand the president

- of the Ocean Steam Navigation Company and both the principal managers of its steamer *Washington*.
- [c. 20 Oct 1847] From Joseph Lane. ALS. Anonymous owner. Introduces Abner B. Phelps, his secretary and interpreter, and presents a Mexican shotgun taken at the Battle of Huamantla.
- 20 Oct From David Levy Yulee. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Recommends Lawrence Byrne as storekeeper of the Pikesville, Md., arsenal.
- 21 Oct From Robert H. Gardiner. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Gardiner, Maine, landowner seeks for his son, Lt. John W. T. Gardiner, of the First Dragoon Regiment, appointment as assistant quartermaster, the position whose duties he has exercised for two years. From two Es, one possibly in Archibald Campbell's hand: referred by William L. Marcy to Thomas S. Jesup on October 29 and returned on October 30.
- 21 Oct From James Lee. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City merchant introduces merchant William P. Paton, of Glasgow, Scotland.
- 21 Oct From Jesse Miller and John Laporte. ALS. DLC–JKP. Pennsylvania secretary of state and surveyor general approve of Isaac G. McKinley's appointment as postmaster at Harrisburg; recommend Samuel D. Patterson's replacement with Edward Hurst as navy agent at Philadelphia.
- 21 Oct From John C. Mullay. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a pay raise, or else a better-paying position elsewhere in the government; encloses a document (not found) substantiating the increase in his work a year ago and his superiors' recommendation to William L. Marcy that he get the raise; encloses a letter from Indian Department clerk William B. Waugh (not found) challenging his request for the raise.
- 22 Oct From James T. Morris. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Former Wilmington, N.C., boarding officer seeks appointment as sutler with the army or navy or as land agent.
- 24 Oct From Thomas Claiborne. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former Tennessee congressman recommends an end to "forbearance and generosity towards Mexicans" to hasten the war's conclusion; seeks appointment to the U.S. Military Academy for his son Duncan R.; laments Polk's "severe indisposition."
- 24 Oct From Benjamin C. Howard. ALS. DLC–JKP. Maryland militia general announces Samuel J. Carr's death and urges Polk to halt Carr's court-martial; recommends that "Mr. Peck"—possibly Lt. John J. or Lt. William G. Peck—replace Carr.

- 25 Oct *From Alfred Balch.*
- 25 Oct From Jefferson Davis. Auction listing for ALS of unknown current location. Recommends Carey H. Fry, formerly a major in the Second Kentucky Infantry Regiment, for an army paymastership.
- 25 Oct From Francis Gallagher et al. ANS. DNA–RG 156. Enclosed in Lawrence Byrne to Polk, October 26, 1847. Baltimore delegates to Maryland House recommend Byrne as storekeeper of the Pikesville, Md., arsenal, due to Samuel J. Carr’s death.
- 25 Oct *From Daniel T. Jenks.*
- 25 Oct *From William L. Marcy.*
- 26 Oct From Robert Armstrong. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Hugh F. Jebb for a job in Washington City, having discussed the topic with Daniel Graham and forgotten to mention it when he saw Polk.
- 26 Oct From Lawrence Byrne. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Encloses Francis Gallagher et al. to Polk, October 25, 1847; refers Polk to letters from Thomas Parkin Scott (August 26), David Levy Yulee (October 20), and Robert M. McLane (October 26), all of which he believes recommend him as storekeeper of the Pikesville, Md., arsenal.
- 26 Oct From James A. Deery et al. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Knoxville, Tenn., steamboat owners seek a contract to transport the East Tennessee regiment to Browns Ferry, in Alabama. From E possibly in Archibald Campbell’s hand: referred by William L. Marcy and received November 6. From E in an unknown hand: answered November 10.
- 26 Oct From Robert M. McLane. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to delay replacing Samuel J. Carr, who died October 24, until they meet; notes Democratic successes in recent Maryland and Pennsylvania elections and hopes for the same in Massachusetts.
- 26 Oct *From Thomas P. Moore.*
- 26 Oct *From Franklin Pierce.*
- 26 Oct From Joseph G. Totten. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Army chief engineer recommends James Eveleth, a clerk in the Engineer Department of the War Department, as storekeeper of the Pikesville, Md., arsenal. From E in an unknown hand: referred to Ordnance Office, War Department.
- 27 Oct From James A. Deery et al. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Propose terms for the contract they sought yesterday. From E in an unknown hand: received by Thomas S. Jesup November 5. From E possibly in Archibald Campbell’s hand: referred by William L. Marcy and received November 6. From E in another unknown hand: answered November 10.

- 28 Oct From James Polk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Naval officer at Baltimore and relative of the president introduces auctioneer Randall Meacham, who has a request regarding his son in the army in Mexico.
- 28 Oct From Lucius J. Polk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Louisianan Frederick A. Sawyer. Published in ULNCP–Ju, p. 251.
- 29 Oct From Robert Wallace. AN. DLC–JKP. Future U.S. marshal for the District of Columbia encloses a copy of his letter of October 27 to U.S. treasurer William Selden emending Wallace’s earlier belief that Alexander Hunter planned to resign soon as marshal for that district.
- 30 Oct From Richard B. Chaplin et al. L in W. M. Y. Keady’s hand. DLC–JKP. Committee announces Polk’s election to honorary membership in the Mechanics’ Independent Literary Society of Washington, Penn.; solicits money or books for its library for “Journeymen and apprentices” and its “Polemical society” of young men who meet weekly for educational discussion.
- 30 Oct *To James G. M. Ramsey.*
- 30 Oct *From James Walker.*
- 30 Oct From William Wallace. ALS. DLC–JKP. Mount Sterling, Ky., lawyer seeks a letter “on any subject whatever” in Polk’s hand.
- 31 Oct From Richard Rush. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Dr. William C. Daniell, a Savannah, Ga., planter who, with his daughter and son, will visit Polk and Sarah Childress Polk; wishes Polk good health, having read in French newspapers of his being “unwell.”
- [Nov 1847] From William L. Marcy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses an order regarding a court-martial at the U.S. Military Academy for Polk to review and return, and “a statement of the contributions at Mexican ports” (neither found).
- 1 Nov *To Aaron V. Brown.*
- 1 Nov *From Joseph Cowdin.*
- 1 Nov From John Forsyth et al. L, copy. DNA–RG 92. Columbus (Ga.) *Times* editor and two other Columbus men discuss the waste of public funds on military expenses; paste in clippings reprinted from the *Boston Journal* (about the bark *Agnes*) and *Philadelphia Inquirer* (about high shipping prices) as evidence; propose, as a solution, a new federal agency to handle purchases and contracts for the army; apply to be its agents. From E possibly in hand of Samuel Humes Porter or Nathan Rice, both War Department clerks: referred by Polk; “Recd Jany 11/48/Q M Genl [Thomas S. Jesup]/Subsistence office.” From E possibly in Archibald Campbell’s hand: referred by William L. Marcy and received January 21.

- 1 Nov From James Peacock. ALS. DLC–JKP. Harrisburg, Penn., acting postmaster encloses Luther Reily et al. to Polk, November 1, 1847, to corroborate claims Peacock made in a letter to Cave Johnson after learning of his dismissal.
- 1 Nov *To James G. M. Ramsey.*
- 1 Nov From Luther Reily et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in James Peacock to Polk, November 1, 1847. Former congressman and other Harrisburg, Penn., men ask Polk to postpone Peacock’s replacement as Harrisburg postmaster by Isaac G. McKinley until Peacock’s term ends in July 1848.
- 1 Nov From Robert Barnwell Rhett. ALS. DLC–JKP. South Carolina congressman asks Polk to postpone action on the South Carolina “Regiment of Horse which I proposed to you” until his arrival “in a few days.”
- 2 Nov From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DNA–RG 107. Recommends Tennessee Methodist minister Burwell B. Abernathy for an army chaplaincy.
- 2 Nov From James Buchanan. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces Georgetown, D.C., pastor and former Georgetown College director Peter B. O’Flanagan (or Flanagan).
- 2 Nov From Edward Harden. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports on the Georgia elections, in which Whigs won a majority in the legislature but Democrat George W. Towns won the governorship; repeats his request for “any respectable appointment.”
- 2 Nov From James H. Thomas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports having paid, on Polk’s behalf, 1847 taxes for Polk, Marshall T. Polk, Jr., and (from her legacy under Samuel Washington Polk’s will) Jane Knox Polk, and having advanced Jane one hundred dollars (also from the legacy); encloses three related receipts from Jane and one from Maury County, Tenn., sheriff Mumford Smith for Marshall’s payment; reports Jane’s “good health” and promises to give Polk “a special message” from her “in person.”
- 2 Nov From Maria Polk Walker. N in Augusta Adams Tabb Walker’s hand. DLC–JKP. Polk’s grandniece, on his birthday, sends good wishes.
- 3 Nov From Edward Harden. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses an extract from William H. Stiles to Robert J. Walker, March 24, 1845, denying responsibility for Harden’s removal as customs collector at Savannah, Ga.; accuses Stiles, whom Polk blamed for the removal, of “unprincipled duplicity.”
- 3 Nov From Elisha K. Kane. ALS. DLC–JKP. Bearer of dispatches hopes in person, on his way from Philadelphia to Mexico City, to receive Polk’s response to the enclosed “request” (not found).

- 4 Nov To Ferdinand II. LS possibly in Archibald Campbell's hand. Current location of auctioned letter unknown. Countersigned by James Buchanan. In response to Ferdinand's letter of August 12 (not found), congratulates him on the birth, that day, of his nephew, Prince Filippo Luigi Maria.
- 4 Nov From Alfred B. Johnson et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Committee announces Polk's election to honorary membership in the Erodelphian Literary Society of Cumberland College, Princeton, Ky.; asks for a letter from Polk.
- 5 Nov *From John A. Mairs.*
- 5 Nov From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses reports on the Chickasaw fund and on Chickasaw-cession land sales for the first half of 1847, per the Chickasaw-U.S. treaties of 1832 and 1834. See also L, copy. DNA–RG 56.
- 7 Nov *From James G. M. Ramsey.*
- 8 Nov *From Seth S. Hance.*
- 8 Nov From James Ross Snowden. ALS. DLC–JKP. Treasurer of the U.S. mint at Philadelphia introduces former Pennsylvania legislator Charles Kugler.
- 8 Nov *From Collin S. Tarpley.*
- 9 Nov From Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports having received from Robert I. Chester the deed for Polk's Dyer County, Tenn., lands; that Chester believes he can quickly sell one part; and that McNeal asked Dyer County land agent Thomas J. Connell to pay the taxes and evaluate the lands preparatory to selling them. Requests a power of attorney to ensure McNeal's ability to sell on Polk's behalf. Notes having read in newspapers that Polk and Sarah Childress Polk "are restored to health."
- 9 Nov *From George Watterston.*
- 11 Nov *From George M. Dallas.*
- 12 Nov From Richard M. Young. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends John Robb as General Land Office chief clerk; encloses Robb to Young, November 11, 1847, outlining Robb's career.
- 13 Nov From George M. Dallas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Suggests Polk appoint Philadelphian John Walls, who is ill and desires "a warmer climate," as "a Messenger, or agent to Cuba, or to some southern region."
- 14 Nov From Thomas H. Benton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Probably enclosed in William Carey Jones to Polk, November 14, 1847. Encloses a letter from David E. Twiggs (not found), who "well deserves what he asks."
- [14 Nov 1847] From William Carey Jones. ANS. DLC–JKP. Delivers a letter Thomas H. Benton received from Mexico—probably

- David E. Twiggs's letter (not found) with Benton's cover letter of today.
- 15 Nov *To William G. Allen.*
- 15 Nov From H. P. Austin. ALS. DNA–RG 156. Offers to manufacture better guns for the army. From E in an unknown hand: forwarded to Ordnance Office, War Department.
- 15 Nov *From Sarah Angelica Singleton Van Buren.*
- 16 Nov From William Lytle. ALS. DLC–JKP. Ohio pioneer, worried about his grandson, Lt. William H. Lytle, asks Polk to ask William O. Butler to make William H. “an Inmate of Gen Butlers famely, or his staff”; encloses a letter of today to Sarah Childress Polk asking her to press his request on Polk.
- [c. 16 Nov 1847] From John C. Mullay. ALS. DLC–JKP. Quotes from a November 8 letter to Mullay from James H. Stewart, who wants to be an assistant surgeon under the Ten Regiment Bill of 1847; reports that Granville D. Searcy and forty other Tennessee Whigs want the U.S. Senate seat; asks if Polk has considered Mullay's pay raise or transfer.
- 17 Nov From Elisha Dodd, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Hartford, Conn., clerk seeks Polk's autograph.
- [18 Nov 1847] *From George Bancroft.*
- 20 Nov From George F. Crocket. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Sumner County, Tenn., circuit court clerk seeks a job at the Memphis Navy Yard. John Appleton's AE: “no vacancy”; E in an unknown hand: “ansd” (reply not found).
- 21 Nov *From [Thomas H. Benton].*
- 22 Nov *From Amos Kendall.*
- 22 Nov From William C. Reddall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Clerk in State Department's Home Bureau applies to be warden of the U.S. penitentiary in Washington City.
- 22 Nov From Samuel Wilcox. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Former navy midshipman encloses a statement from Roger Jones (not found) confirming marine major Levi Twiggs's death; solicits a marine lieutenantcy.
- 23 Nov From Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS. DLC–JKP. Describes his plan to rent and farm part of the late Marshall T. Polk's land near Bolivar, Tenn.; reports having rejected offers to lease the land; asks when it will be for sale, because John H. Bills wants to purchase part of it.
- 23 Nov *From Thomas P. Moore.*
- [23 and 27 Nov 1847] *From Gideon J. Pillow.*
- 24 Nov *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 24 Nov *To John T. Leigh.*
- 24 Nov *To John A. Mairs.*

- 24 Nov To John Y. Mason. Auction listing for ALS of unknown current location. Introduces Mrs. Branda.
- 24 Nov *To Pickett, Perkins & Co.*
- 26 Nov From Gideon J. Pillow. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Philadelphia *North American* editor William C. Tobey, who came with the army to Mexico, for a lieutenancy in the Fourth Infantry Regiment.
- 27 Nov From James B. Clarke. ALS. DNA–RG 48. Washington City merchant seeks for his father, Isaac, the wardenship of the U.S. penitentiary in Washington City, incumbent Robert Coleman having died.
- 27 Nov From John L. Deburm. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Deburm to Sarah Childress Polk, November 27, 1847. Washington City man urges Polk to reappoint John M. Moore, former General Land Office chief clerk, to his former post on James H. Piper's resignation.
- 27 Nov From John F. Hamtramck et al. (written by Otho H. Harrison). ALS. DNA–RG 107. Forty-nine Virginia and Mississippi officers recommend Capt. Ephraim G. Alburtis, of the Virginia volunteers, for an appointment in the regular army.
- 27 Nov From George F. Thomson. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City Democrat encloses a New York *Globe* editorial he wrote, praising the accomplishments of Polk and his cabinet and censuring Whigs who ignore them.
- 27 Nov To Robert J. Walker. ALS. Current location of auctioned letter unknown. Instructs Walker to give bearer Marshall M. Smith, of Mississippi, whom Polk recommends as a customs inspector at New Orleans, Walker's letter of introduction to New Orleans customs collector Denis Prieur.
- 28 Nov From Elliott F. Shepard. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City youth seeks Polk's autograph.
- 29 Nov To Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Encloses the power of attorney McNeal requested in his letter of November 9, so he can sell Polk's Dyer County, Tenn., lands; discusses various transactions, including rent collection, the sale of Polk's Madison County land, and taxes on Marshall T. Polk's heirs' lands in Fayette and Tipton Counties.
- 29 Nov From John C. Mullay. ALS. DLC–JKP. Pleads with Polk to grant him the pay of principal clerk in the Indian Department's Division of Records and Files, a job he has performed for over a year; discusses the documents he sent on October 21.
- 29 Nov To Robert J. Walker. ALS. Current location of auctioned letter unknown. Asks for the paragraph about the

- Warehousing System for Polk's Third Annual Message to Congress; encloses John F. Stump to Polk, September 10, 1847, and Cave Johnson's letter supporting Stump (not found), whom Polk recommends as a customs inspector at Philadelphia.
- 30 Nov *From James Brooks.*
- 30 Nov From Jefferson Davis. ALS destroyed; photocopies held by TxHR-JD and Ms-Ar. Recommends Samuel R. Harrison, Charles T. Harlan, and Samuel W. Marsh, Democrats who served under Davis in the First Mississippi Rifle Regiment, for army appointments.
- 30 Nov *From George C. De Kay.*
- 1 Dec From Helen Nevins. ALS. DLC-JKP. Georgetown, D.C., woman seeks a job for her brother.
- 1 Dec To Vernon K. Stevenson. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Instructs Stevenson to collect John M. Bass's rent and to insure Polk's house but not to collect Evan Young's payment until October; promises to have Bolivar, Tenn., receipts forwarded to Stevenson in February and to provide funds if he wishes to pay workers during renovation; approves his October 17 letter; asks about the estate's title; mentions being "much occupied in preparing to meet Congress."
- 1 Dec To Evan Young. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Permits Young, who purchased Polk's Columbia, Tenn., house, to delay payment on the note due January 1, 1848, until October 1.
- 2 Dec From James K. and Sarah Childress Polk to Nathan and Hannah Ayer Clifford. Partly printed N in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. MeHi. Invite the Cliffords to dinner on December 9.
- 2 Dec From Ransom H. Gillet. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses copies of Samuel Hays's letters to Gillet of November 28 and 29, disputing Hays's removal as U.S. marshal for the Western District of Pennsylvania, with their enclosures: three certificates supporting Hays's claims and Gillet's letter to Hays of September 22.
- 2 Dec From Robert M. McLane. ALS. DLC-JKP. Notes William J. Bass's seeking readmission to Mount St. Mary's College; asks to reschedule McLane's meeting with Polk from tonight to December 4; estimates that as many Whigs as Democrats will be absent from Congress on December 6.
- 3 Dec From Robert Anderson. ALS. DLC-JKP. Scottish immigrant in Boston applies to be "Book-keeper or Overseer" on one of Polk's "extensive plantations."
- 3 Dec *From Daniel T. Jenks.*
- 3 Dec From DeWitt Clinton Judah. ALS. DLC-JKP. New York City poet seeks Polk's autograph "for a forth coming work."

- [4 Dec 1847] *From Thomas Ritchie.*
6 Dec From Jefferson Davis. Autograph dealer's catalogue entry for ALS of unknown current location. Encloses the application (not found) of William Spinks, formerly of the First Mississippi Rifle Regiment, for an army appointment.
- 6 Dec From John D. Pope. ALS. KyLoF. Louisville, Ky., law student and former Mexican War soldier seeks a lieutenantancy; encloses a recommendation from Louisville lawyer William S. Pilcher (not found).
- 6 Dec From Powell Stackhouse, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Philadelphia conveyancer seeks Polk's autograph.
- 7 Dec *From Daniel T. Jenks.*
- 8 Dec *From Abraham Lincoln.*
- 8 Dec From Robert W. Powell. ALS. DLC–JKP. New Orleans merchant asks Polk to give his letter of October 8 (not found) to Daniel Graham.
- 8 Dec *From William A. Richardson and Abraham Lincoln.*
- 9 Dec From Arnold Plumer. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Lecky Harper to Polk, December 21, 1847. Introduces Pittsburgh *Daily Morning Post* editor Harper, who seeks "Government printing, advertising &c."
- 10 Dec To Robert Armstrong. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Introduces Thomas E. Robins, who travels to England to seek the relinquishment of claims on the Mississippi government.
- 10 Dec *To George Bancroft.*
- 10 Dec From James G. King. AN. DLC–JKP. Former New York (State) Chamber of Commerce president notes having forwarded his copy of Polk's Third Annual Message to his successor, Moses H. Grinnell.
- 10 Dec *From Cornelius W. Lawrence.*
- 10 Dec From George P. Morris. ALS. DLC–JKP. Editor of New York City's *Home Journal* thanks Polk for sending his Third Annual Message; praises it.
- 11 Dec From John Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for sending his Third Annual Message; asserts that it "swept" away the arguments of Polk's opponents, including Henry Clay, and that "the masses of all parties, sans the crazy Abolitionists, are with you as regards Mexico."
- 11 Dec From Edward Everett. ALS. DLC–JKP. President of Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., acknowledges receipt of Polk's Third Annual Message.
- 11 Dec *From Daniel T. Jenks.*
- [11 Dec 1847] From Cave Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses copies of Polk's Third Annual Message (not found) for Polk to frank to men in Johnson's Tennessee district; citing displeasure with Whig military appointments from Kentucky, urges

- Polk to appoint Kentuckian Mr. Heiss, not John Rowan, Jr., as chargé d'affaires to Sardinia.
- 11 Dec *From Abraham Lincoln.*
- 11 Dec *From Joseph H. Talbot.*
- 11 Dec From Joseph Waters. ALS. DLC–JKP. Salem, Mass., man seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 12 Dec From Jefferson Davis. L, copy. TxHR–JD. Encloses and endorses revenue-service captain John A. Webster, Jr.’s letter (not found) seeking “to be employed against the enemy of our Country.”
- 12 Dec *From Gideon J. Pillow.*
- 13 Dec From Jefferson Davis. ALS. DNA–RG 107. Recommends Lt. William H. Scott, of the Eleventh Infantry Regiment, for a higher rank in a new regiment. A note by Richard K. Meade about “Lieut Scott’s application to be transferred to the old army” follows Davis’s letter.
- 13 Dec From Anthony Dugro et al. ANS. DLC–JKP. Inviting committee invites Polk to the First Annual Ball of the German Democratic Republican Committee of the City and County of New York, on December 24.
- 13 Dec From Daniel Haines. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Former New Jersey governor recommends Lt. Samuel G. French, of New Jersey, for appointment as assistant quartermaster; reports that Sussex County Democrats praise Polk’s Third Annual Message. From two Es, one possibly in Archibald Campbell’s hand: received by Thomas S. Jesup December 20.
- 13 Dec From George W. Towns. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Edward Harden for an office.
- 13 Dec From William Webster. ALS. DLC–JKP. Broad Creek, Queen Anne’s County, Md., man seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 14 Dec From Edward D. Ingraham. ALS. DLC–JKP. Philadelphia town meeting president transmits the proceedings of the pro-war, pro-administration meeting held on December 11, published in the Philadelphia *Spirit of the Times and Daily Keystone*, December 13.
- 15 Dec From Benjamin B. French. ALS. DLC–JKP. Removed by the Whigs as U.S. House clerk, lists the subordinate clerks and messengers who have been or soon will be removed and encloses a chart describing them; asks Polk to appoint them elsewhere in place of Whig clerks and encloses a chart listing the latter.
- 15 Dec *From Samuel H. Laughlin.*
- 15 Dec From John A. Mairs. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that Polk’s slaves are well and have packed 105 bags of cotton and sent half to Troy, Miss., from where John T. Leigh ordered

- them shipped; lists the weights of bags 63 to 105; notes that Long Harry will know what sizes of iron Polk should buy; hopes to finish gathering the cotton by Christmas; describes Polk's crops and livestock; reports that they made the slaves' clothing and purchased their shoes for winter, and that a mule died.
- 16 Dec To Roger S. Baldwin. Partly printed N in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. CtY. Invites U.S. senator from Connecticut to dinner on December 23.
- [17 Dec 1847] From Sophia and Catherine C. Dallas to James K. and Sarah Childress Polk. AN. DLC–JKP. George M. Dallas's daughters accept an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- 17 Dec From Arthur P. and Elizabeth Laura Alston Hayne to James K. and Sarah Childress Polk. AN. DLC–JKP. South Carolina politician and his wife accept an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- 17 Dec From George Loyall. ALS. DLC–JKP. Norfolk, Va., navy agent thanks Polk for a copy of his Third Annual Message; asserts that it successfully defends "the origin and conduct of the 'Mexican War.'" (Volume 11 erroneously refers to Loyall as George Royall.)
- 17 Dec From Hopkins L. Turney. ALS. DLC–JKP. Declines an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- 17 Dec From Samuel F. Vinton. AN. DLC–JKP. Ohio congressman accepts an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- [17 Dec 1847] From Robert C. Winthrop. AN. DLC–JKP. Accepts an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- [18 Dec 1847] From Roger S. Baldwin. AN. DLC–JKP. Accepts Polk's invitation of December 16.
- 18 Dec From Linn Boyd. AN. DLC–JKP. Accepts an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- 18 Dec From Jesse D. and Mary Elizabeth Turpin Bright. AN. DLC–JKP. U.S. senator from Indiana and his wife accept an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- 18 Dec From Thomas L. Clingman. AN. DLC–JKP. North Carolina congressman accepts an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- 18 Dec From Asbury and Liliias Arnot Dickins to James K. and Sarah Childress Polk. AN. DLC–JKP. U.S. Senate secretary accepts and his wife declines an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- [18 Dec 1847] From John A. and Catherine Morgan Dix to James K. and Sarah Childress Polk. AN. DLC–JKP. John accepts and his wife declines an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.

- 18 Dec From Benjamin B. French and Edmund Burke. ALS. DLC–JKP. Ask Polk to give a clerkship to Charles P. Russell, removed as U.S. House messenger by House clerk Thomas J. Campbell, before Campbell rehires him, as indignation over his removal will help Democrats in New Hampshire.
- 18 Dec From Edward A. Hannegan. AN. DLC–JKP. U.S. senator from Indiana accepts an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- 18 Dec From Washington and Mary Hosmer Walbridge Hunt. AN. DLC–JKP. New York congressman and his wife accept an invitation (not found) from Polk and Sarah Childress Polk to dinner on December 23.
- 18 Dec *From Daniel T. Jenks.*
- 18 Dec *From Francis W. Pickens.*
- 18 Dec From Robert Barnwell Rhett and Elizabeth Washington Burnet Rhett. AN. DLC–JKP. The Rhetts accept an invitation (not found) from Polk and Sarah Childress Polk to dinner on December 23.
- [19 Dec 1847] From William Allen. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. senator from Ohio declines an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23, due to “calamity.”
- 19 Dec *To Gideon J. Pillow.*
- 19 Dec From John Slidell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former minister to Mexico praises Polk’s Third Annual Message, whose discussion of the Mexican War will ensure Democrats’ electoral victory; expects Louisiana to choose a Democratic U.S. senator despite the legislature’s slight Whig majority.
- 20 Dec From John Bell. AN. DLC–JKP. Recommends Hugh F. Jebb for a clerkship in the General Land Office.
- 20 Dec From James B. Greenman et al. ANS. DLC–JKP. Corresponding committee invites Polk to a public dinner on December 24 in New York City to honor Lt. James Decatur Potter, of the First New York Infantry Regiment.
- 20 Dec *From Hupakinyan and Inyangmani.*
- 20 Dec *To Ezekiel P. McNeal.*
- 20 Dec From Willie P. Mangum. AN. DLC–JKP. U.S. senator from North Carolina accepts an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23. Published in ULNCP–Ju, p. 251.
- 20 Dec *From John Norvell.*
- 20 Dec *From Pickett, Perkins & Co.*
- 20 Dec From Romulus M. Saunders. ALS. DNA–RG 59. Relates Thomas Cate Reynolds’s latest infractions as legation secretary to Spain: refusing to accompany Saunders to events, to give him American news, and to explain his absence at a palace ball—retribution for his disapproval of Reynolds’s dispatches; requests Reynolds’s removal.

- 21 Dec From Albert C. Greene. AN. DLC–JKP. U.S. senator from Rhode Island accepts an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- 21 Dec From Lecky Harper. ALS. DLC–JKP. Forced to return home without seeing Polk, encloses Arnold Plumer to Polk, December 9, 1847.
- 21 Dec From Andrew Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Arrangement committee chairman encloses the published resolutions of a Philadelphia pro-war mass meeting of December 18, signed by meeting president John T. Smith.
- 21 Dec *From William D. Moseley.*
- 21 Dec *From Robert B. Reynolds.*
- 21 Dec From Joseph R. Underwood. AN. DLC–JKP. U.S. senator from Kentucky accepts an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 23.
- 22 Dec *From James W. McClung.*
- 22 Dec *From Victor E. Piollet.*
- [22 Dec 1847] *From Henry M. Shreve.*
- 24 Dec From George H. Jones. ALS. DLC–JKP. First Auditor’s Office chief clerk thanks Polk for his appointment; praises Polk’s restoring “the Government to the true Republican standard of a strict adherence to the Federal constitution.”
- 24 Dec From Joseph Kennedy. ALS. Bill and Joyce Subjack, Neverbird Antiques, Surry, Va. Recruiting officer for South Carolina’s Palmetto Regiment, having heard of its impending disbandment, asks to raise a new regiment with “at least” his current rank of captain. From two Es in an unknown hand; forwarded by Polk; received by Roger Jones January 11.
- 24 Dec From William S. Mallory et al. ANS. DLC–JKP. Arrangements committee invites Polk to a public dinner on December 29 in Norfolk, Va., to honor Capt. Oscar E. Edwards, of the voltigeurs.
- 25 Dec From William Cranch. AN. DLC–JKP. Chief justice of the U.S. circuit court for the District of Columbia declines an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 30, owing to “age and infirmities.”
- 25 Dec From John and Sarah Bella Ludlow Garrard McLean. AN. DLC–JKP. U.S. Supreme Court associate justice and his wife accept an invitation (not found) from Polk and Sarah Childress Polk to dinner on December 30.
- [27 Dec 1848] From Francis P. and Eliza Violetta Howard Gist Blair. AN. DLC–JKP. The Blairs decline an invitation (not found) from Polk and Sarah Childress Polk to dinner on December 30.
- 27 Dec From James S. Morsell. AN. DLC–JKP. Judge of the U.S. district court for the District of Columbia declines an invitation (not found) to dinner on December 30.

- 27 Dec From James Sampson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Polk’s college schoolmate, now a Clarksville, Tex., minister, asserts that he and Polk are both God’s “*stewards*”; seeks appointment of his son-in-law, David L. Raws, as postmaster at Clarksville.
- [28 or 29 Dec 1847] From George Abernethy. PLs. Published in Senate Executive Document No. 47, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 2–3; *BPHO*, p. 343; and Frances Fuller Victor, *The Early Indian Wars of Oregon Compiled from the Oregon Archives and Other Original Sources with Muster Rolls* (Salem, Ore.: Frank C. Baker, 1894), pp. 143–44. Introduces Joseph L. Meek, appointed special messenger to Washington City by Oregon’s provisional legislature.
- 28 Dec From George Abernethy. PL. Published in *BPHO*, pp. 302–3. Submits “two papers” about Indians in Oregon, probably two of those published in Senate Executive Document No. 47, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 3–8, all of which were sent with this letter and Abernethy’s of December 28 or 29; defends Jessy Quinn Thornton, a newspaper having published resolutions (defeated in the provisional legislature) against him in hopes of keeping him from receiving an appointment from Polk.
- 28 Dec *From Sidney Breese.*
- 28 Dec From Reverdy Johnson. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. senator from Maryland informs Polk that he received, in error, Polk and Sarah Childress Polk’s invitation to U.S. senator Henry Johnson, of Louisiana, and accepted it yesterday (neither letter found); today, noticing the error, he gave the invitation to Henry.
- 28 Dec From Thomas G. King. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Former military storekeeper, cashiered by a court-martial for “indiscretions,” asks Polk to reduce his sentence; claims William H. Polk supports him. From E in an unknown hand: referred to Thomas S. Jesup.
- [28 Dec 1847] From John M. Niles. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. Senate Arrangements Committee chairman, as directed by the committee, informs Polk that George M. Dallas and the senators will accompany John Fairfield’s body to the train depot this afternoon.
- 28 Dec From James Thompson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Pennsylvania congressman accepts an invitation (not found) of yesterday.
- 29 Dec From Charles H. Beck. ALS. DLC–JKP. Newburyport, Mass., student seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 29 Dec From Charles G. Greene. ALS. DLC–JKP. Urges Polk to reappoint his brother, Nathaniel, postmaster at Boston.
- 29 Dec From Henry Horn. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces friend Samuel Hood.

- 29 Dec From Robert W. and Sarah Frances Smith Johnson to James K. and Sarah Childress Polk. AN. DLC–JKP. Arkansas congressman and his wife accept an invitation (not found) to dinner on January 4.
- 29 Dec From Robert Taylor. ALS. DLC–JKP. Philadelphia merchant reminds Polk of Polk’s promise to his son, James L., to have penalties remitted for James C. Ingleby, captain of the British bark *Royal Saxon*.
- 30 Dec From Charles J. Bushnell. ALS. DLC–JKP. Historian in New York City requests a copy of Polk’s Third Annual Message “with the *accompanying documents*.”
- 30 Dec *From Franklin Clark.*
- 30 Dec From Robert B. Reynolds. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Seeks the reappointment of bearer Thomas G. King, convicted by a court-martial of “intemperance.” From Thomas S. Jesup’s AES: opposes the reappointment.
- 30 Dec From William M. Smyth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to order Edward H. Barton to Washington City to report on the army’s sick; announces that Smyth will leave New Orleans for Washington City on January 1; reports that William H. Polk, after an illness, took command of his company in Mexico City on December 9.
- 30 Dec From Thomas White. ALS. DLC–JKP. Pleasant Hill, Mo., Democrat seeks an appointment, possibly in “the Idian Nation.”
- 31 Dec From John M. Bell. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Enclosed in Bell to John Y. Mason, January 11, 1848. Navy agent at New Orleans resigns effective January 15.
- 31 Dec *From John P. Helfenstein.*
- 31 Dec From Henry Horn. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Recommends Home Squadron veteran Chandler P. McCorkle for an additional or assistant pursership if Congress authorizes more such appointments. From Polk’s AEI: referred to John Y. Mason on January 17, 1848. E probably in Navy Secretary’s Office clerk Charles W. Welsh’s hand: “Ansd.”
- 31 Dec *From Anthony Ten Eyck.*
- 31 Dec From Richard M. Young. ALS. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges a petition by Edward D. Holland et al. (not found), which Polk referred to the General Land Office, requesting the sale of certain Wisconsin lands as authorized in the Wisconsin statehood law of March 3; rejects the petition, as that law was contingent on the approval of Wisconsin’s constitution of December 16, 1846, which voters rejected; reports that sales have been delayed until Congress takes action.

1848

- [c. 1848] From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former U.S. senator from North Carolina introduces William S. Ashe, “the leading Democrat of” his North Carolina congressional district, who brings wife Sarah Ann Green Ashe “to North for her health.” Published in ULNCP–Ju, pp. 251–52.
- [c. 1848] *From [George C. Sibley et al.]*
- [between 1 and 11 Jan 1848] From John E. Norris. ANS. DLC–JKP. Corresponding secretary invites Polk to the Jackson Democratic Association’s supper on January 12 at Jackson Hall, Washington City, to commemorate Andrew Jackson’s victory in the Battle of New Orleans.
- 1 Jan From Charles R. Clarke. ALS. DLC–JKP. Rochester, N.Y., resident seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 1 Jan From Charles Elliot. ALS. DLC–JKP. Bath, Maine, resident seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 1 Jan From Charles F. Fletcher. ALS. DLC–JKP. Sends New Year’s Day greetings; praises Polk’s administration; wishes him a happy retirement.
- 1 Jan From Thomas O. Jones. ALS. DLC–JKP. Lieutenant of Maryland and District of Columbia volunteers requests a meeting this evening.
- 1 Jan From Richard K. Meade. AN. DLC–JKP. Accepts an invitation (not found) to dinner on January 4.
- 3 Jan *To John Anderson.*
- 3 Jan From William C. Bouck. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former New York governor seeks an army paymastership for his son Joseph W.
- 3 Jan From George M. Dallas. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter from “a very ardent soldier in Mexico” (not found) and requests its return.
- 3 Jan From Benjamin B. French. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to replace William H. Topping, a Whig clerk in the Fourth Auditor’s Office, with French’s brother Edmund F., who was removed from a U.S. House clerkship.
- 3 Jan From Daniel Saffarrans. ALS. DLC–JKP. Indian Territory trader mentions having yesterday given John Bell a letter (not found) to deliver to Polk so that Polk could have William Medill write a report; hopes that Polk and Bell will, on meeting, discuss other topics.
- 4 Jan *From John A. Mairs.*
- 6 Jan *From John M. Bass.*
- 7 Jan *From John Anderson.*
- 7 Jan *To William L. Marcy.*
- 9 Jan *From Franklin Clark.*

- 10 Jan From John A. Dix. ALS. DNA–RG 127. Introduces Mary Morris Van den Heuvel, of New York, who seeks a lieutenancy in the marine corps for her son (John or Robert).
To William L. Marcy.
- 10 Jan [10 Jan 1848] *From William L. Marcy.*
- 10 Jan *From Aaron H. Palmer.*
- 10 Jan From Elijah F. Purdy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces “young friend” George Everson.
- 10 Jan From Frederick Stoever. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Philadelphia merchant recommends Chandler P. McCorkle for a navy assistant pursership.
From Asa B. Merrill.
- 11 Jan *From Mariano D. Papy.*
- 12 Jan From George W. Clinton. ALS. DLC–JKP. New U.S. attorney for the Northern District of New York, confirmed by the Senate, thanks Polk for his appointment.
- 13 Jan From George W. Bethune. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Philadelphia Dutch Reformed minister recommends Chandler P. McCorkle, whose mother is a parishioner, for a navy assistant pursership.
To Ezekiel P. McNeal.
- 13 Jan From Robert H. Morris. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Recommends, on his own and others’ behalf, Matthias Williamson, of New York City, for a navy pursership. From Polk’s AE: referred to John Y. Mason on April 14.
- 13 Jan From John M. Niles. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. Senate Post Offices and Post Roads Committee chairman notes that, on January 8, Polk erroneously nominated “George W Davis” for postmaster at Troy, N.Y., instead of “George F. Davis,” as intended.
To William H. Polk.
- 13 Jan To Vernon K. Stevenson. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Rejects John M. Bass’s claim, conveyed through John Catron, that Polk’s purchase of the Felix Grundy property excluded the adjoining avenue; asks Stevenson to obtain the deed from Bass and Jacob McGavock; briefly discusses the workmen’s pay, rents, shingles, money advanced to William J. Bass, and Evan Young’s note.
From Samuel Teirney.
- 14 Jan From George W. Agnew. ANS. DLC–JKP. Lawrenceville, N.J., resident seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 15 Jan To Aaron V. Brown. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Asks Brown to meet with John M. Bass about Bass and Polk’s dispute over ownership of the avenue adjoining the Grundy property; describes Polk’s plans “to improve it” and to allow neighbors access to it.

- 15 Jan From John F. McMillan et al. ANS. DNA–RG 107. Kentucky legislators recommend Augustus Boyd, of Newport, Ky., for a captaincy or lieutenantcy under the Ten Regiment Bill of 1848.
- [15 Jan 1848] From Duncan K. McRae. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. attorney for North Carolina recommends Private Charles Manly, Jr., of North Carolina, for an army commission. Published in ULNCP–Ju, p. 252.
- 16 Jan *To Aaron V. Brown.*
- 16 Jan *From Andrew M. Robinson.*
- 17 Jan From William H. Backhouse. ALS. DLC–JKP. Corresponding secretary announces Polk's election to honorary membership in the Phrenocosneian Literary Society of Tuscarna Academy, Academia, Penn.
- 17 Jan *To John M. Bass.*
- 17 Jan *From James M. Howry.*
- 17 Jan *From Pickett, Perkins & Co.*
- 18 Jan From Robert Barnwell Rhett. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks where he can read Thomas H. Benton's remarks on tariffs at Mexican ports.
- 18 Jan From John Waters. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Polk replace rather than renovate Felix Grundy's house.
- 20 Jan From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports others' support for Nathaniel O. Wallace, of Fayetteville, Tenn., for a government clerkship.
- [c. 20 Jan 1848] *From Daniel Graham.*
- 20 Jan From William H. Haywood, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces nephew John H. Manly.
- 20 Jan From Samuel Medary. ALS. DLC–JKP. Columbus *Ohio Statesman* editor recommends former Ohio state senator James Parker for a job.
- 21 Jan From James O. Hervey. ALS. KyLoF. Mexican War veteran in Nicholasville, Ky., seeks a captaincy under the Ten Regiment Bill of 1848.
- 22 Jan From W. T. Ames. ALS. DLC–JKP. Aurora, Ill., man reports that most Democrats in John Wentworth's Illinois congressional district do not want to renominate Wentworth, whose Chicago *Democrat* opposes the administration; asks Polk to end Wentworth's influence to create new post offices, which increase his supporters.
- 22 Jan *From Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- [23 Jan 1848] From Robert J. Walker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports having spoken with North Carolina congressman James I. McKay about the new loan bill; will visit Polk at 7:30 p.m.
- [24 Jan 1848] From James J. Faran. AN. DLC–JKP. Ohio congressman requests a meeting this morning. From Polk's AE: "he

- expressed fears that the public money might not be safe in the hands of Mr [Patrick] Collins, a collector at Cincinnati./I directed an immediate investigation to be made by the Treasury Dept.”
- 24 Jan From Reason B. Willoughby et al. ANS. DNA–RG 107. Iowa legislature recommends Thomas Cox, of the Iowa volunteers, for a second lieutenancy in the dragoons. Iowa Supreme Court justices Joseph Williams et al. and governor and executive officers Ansel Briggs et al. added their signed concurrences.
- 25 Jan From Thomas B. Carroll. ALS. DLC–JKP. Troy (N.Y.) *Northern Budget* publisher encloses a letter of January 19 from Alanson Cook, his former partner, to Carroll about Carroll’s failed bid for the mission to the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies and his fitness for that to the Papal States.
- 25 Jan From Susan Grundy Ewing, signed “Mrs H[enry] Ewing.” ALS. DLC–JKP. Felix Grundy’s sister, whose son, Nathan, is on trial for assault on a Yale College, New Haven, Conn., tutor, asks Polk to ask state supreme court justice Joel Hinman to reduce bail. From Polk’s AE: “it is impossible for me to interfere.”
- 25 Jan From Bryan Mullanphy. ALS. DNA–RG 60. Later enclosed in William L. Marcy to Polk, March 18, 1848. St. Louis mayor requests the balance of an appropriation for the St. Louis harbor, to build a stone dam at Bloody Island; attests that bonds and St. Clair Ferry Company money will be spent on the harbor, as required by the enclosed ordinance (not found). From Polk’s AE and AEI: referred to Nathan Clifford for an opinion; referred to Marcy to confirm appropriation’s existence, amount remaining, and “whether it has not passed to the ‘surplus fund’;/March 14th 1848.” From E in an unknown hand: received by Topography Bureau March 15; “Balance \$22,714.50.”
- 25 Jan From Thomas J. Turner. ALS. DLC–JKP. Disclaims a letter he and other Illinois congressmen signed (not found) supporting “Dr Egan,” of Chicago, for an appointment in the Chicago District.
- 26 Jan From William J. Alexander. ALS. DLC–JKP. New superintendent of the U.S. mint at Charlotte, N.C., thanks Polk for his appointment; seeks appointment for his son, William Lee Alexander, to the U.S. Military Academy. See also ALS, photocopy. T–VWA. Published in ULNCP–Ju, p. 253.
- 26 Jan From Benjamin Patton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Allegheny County, Penn., judge defends brother-in-law J. Albert Helfenstein

- against calls for his replacement as receiver of public monies at Milwaukee, Wisc. Terr.
- 26 Jan From Washington Curran Whitthorne. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces brother Samuel Houston Whitthorne; encloses Curran’s letter of today to Robert J. Walker, resigning as a clerk in the Fourth Auditor’s Office.
- 27 Jan From Alfred Iverson, Sr., et al. (written by Hugh A. Haralson). ALS. DLC–JKP. Georgia congressmen recommend David E. Twiggs for a brevet for services at Monterey; compare his war service and rank with William J. Worth’s.
- 28 Jan *From George Bancroft.*
- 28 Jan From Robert Elrod. ALS. DNA–RG 107. Batavia, Ohio, minister inquires about his application of last spring, with a recommendation by Thomas L. Hamer et al., (neither found) for the chaplaincy at the military barracks at Newport, Ky.
- 28 Jan From Ezekiel P. McNeal. ALS. DLC–JKP. Having received Polk’s letter of January 13, reports having asked Spencer Jackson to meet about leasing Marshall T. Polk, Jr.’s land; outlines money collected for rents and land sales in Madison County, Tenn.; notes that Polk’s Dyer County lands have not sold.
- [c. 29 Jan 1848] From William J. Brown. ALI. DLC–JKP. Alleges that Treasurer’s Office clerk Anthony McLean is a Whig.
- 29 Jan From Frederick W. Lord. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York congressman accepts an invitation (not found) to dinner on February 1.
- 31 Jan From John Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks reappointment as customs collector at Portland, Maine, despite the signatures of current and former members of Congress on petitions supporting former Maine governor and congressman Robert P. Dunlap.
- 31 Jan *To Lydia Eliza Polk Caldwell.*
- 31 Jan *From John A. Gardner.*
- 31 Jan From Abbott Lawrence. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces a relative, Harvard University student Edward I. Bigelow.
- 31 Jan To John T. Leigh. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Acknowledges Leigh’s letters of January 12 and 14 (neither found); thanks him for handling “my business”; writes that Polk paid the bill for George A. Galliday for \$635 and will pay that for John A. Mairs for \$315.76; sends greetings to “*Dr. & Mrs. Towns*” (likely James M. and Betsey Leigh Towns [or Townes]).
- [c. Feb–Mar 1848] From Hugh H. Kelly et al. ANS. DNA–RG 156. Virginia legislators recommend William Portlock, of Portsmouth,

- Va., to replace Dr. John M. Galt as military storekeeper (they erroneously wrote "*Naval Storekeeper*") at Apalachicola, Fla. Virginia congressman Archibald Atkinson's signed concurrence follows Kelly et al.'s letter.
- From Jefferson Davis et al.*
To John A. Mairs.
- Feb 1848
- 1 Feb From Frederick P. Stanton. ALS. DLC–JKP. Urges Polk to retain Hugh F. Jebb in the General Land Office.
- 1 Feb From Robert Campbell, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that Evan Young has paid Vernon K. Stevenson the first two thousand dollars for Polk's Columbia, Tenn., property; asks for a two-thousand-dollar loan, having borrowed five thousand to buy John B. Hays's property, which he then sold.
- 2 Feb From Robert Campbell, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that Evan Young has paid Vernon K. Stevenson the first two thousand dollars for Polk's Columbia, Tenn., property; asks for a two-thousand-dollar loan, having borrowed five thousand to buy John B. Hays's property, which he then sold.
- 2 Feb From Sidney Lawrence. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York congressman summarizes and dismisses three letters opposing William F. Haile's reappointment as collector of the district of Champlain, N.Y, one of them related to railroad routes.
- [2 Feb 1848] *From William L. Marcy.*
- 2 Feb From Charles Shaler et al. PC. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in James Blakely to Polk, February 12, 1848. Managers invite the recipient to the Mercy Hospital Soiree, in Pittsburgh on February 24.
- 3 Feb From Albert G. Brown et al. ALS. DNA–RG 94. Members of Congress from Mississippi, including Jefferson Davis, seek an appointment at the U.S. Military Academy for Claudius F. LeGrand.
- 3 Feb From William M. Smyth. ALS. DLC–JKP. Announces that he cannot leave Baltimore for Washington City until he recovers from pleurisy; reports that he has no dispatches from Winfield Scott, though Scott promised to give him one at Veracruz.
- [4, 11, 18, or 25 Feb 1848] From Timothy Jenkins. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York congressman introduces Mr. Lawrence and Mr. Potter, who want Enos D. Hopping to be buried in New York.
- 4 Feb *From John A. Mairs.*
- [4 Feb 1848] *From Robert J. Walker.*
- 5 Feb *From Nathaniel Hawthorne.*
- [c. 5 Feb 1848] From Sidney Lawrence. ALS. DLC–JKP. Identifies his February 2 letter as "*Private*."
- 5 Feb From William P. Rowles et al. LS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in Michael Duffy to Polk, February 20, 1848. Tennessee legislators recommend former Tennessee legislator Duffy for a job.

- 7 Feb From Arthur P. Bagby. ALS. DLC–GW. Recommends Haym M. Salomon, Jr., for a navy pursership, citing an 1846 recommendation by Alabama’s congressional delegation (not found). Dixon H. Lewis’s signed concurrence is in the margin.
- 7 Feb From Harriet Craig Berryhill Nowland. ALS. DLC–JKP. Arkansas widow and old acquaintance of the Polks asks Polk to appoint her son William to the U.S. Military Academy in 1849, despite his being under sixteen. From Polk’s AE: “Let an answer be given that he is under the age prescribed.”
- 7 Feb *From Robert B. Reynolds.*
- 7 Feb From William J. Whitthorne. ALS. DLC–JKP. Washington Curran Whitthorne and Samuel Houston Whitthorne’s father notes that Polk offered the clerkship held by Curran, who planned to leave for Mexico on January 27, to Samuel; thanks Polk for sending his Third Annual Message; praises his veto message of the Harbors and Rivers Appropriation Bill of 1847; discusses William’s role in the recent Tennessee elections and partisan squabbles over Bromfield L. Ridley’s reappointment as chancellor; asks Polk for a job; thanks him for his longtime friendship.
- 8 Feb From Sidney C. Adams. ALS. DLC–JKP. Boston resident seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 8 Feb From Aaron V. Brown. ALS. DLC–JKP. Asks Polk to give a clerkship in Washington City, New Orleans, or Mobile, Ala., to their impoverished friend George Crockett.
- 8 Feb *From Jane Maria Eliza McManus Storms.*
- 9 Feb From Levi Woodbury. ALS. NhD. Recommends Samuel C. Baldwin, of Plymouth, Mass., for a navy pursership.
- [c. 10 Feb 1848] From Jefferson Davis. ALS. DNA–RG 107. Encloses and endorses [Asa] Parker et al. to Polk, c. February 10, 1848. Albert G. Brown’s signed concurrence follows Davis’s letter. Henry S. Foote to Polk, February 10, 1848, is appended.
- 10 Feb From Henry S. Foote. ALS. DNA–RG 107. Appended to Jefferson Davis to Polk, c. February 10, 1848. Encloses and endorses [Asa] Parker et al. to Polk, c. February 10, 1848. Winfield S. Featherston’s signed concurrence follows Foote’s letter.
- [c. 10 Feb 1848] From [Asa] Parker (forename uncertain) et al. ANS. DNA–RG 107. Enclosed in Jefferson Davis to Polk, c. February 10, 1848, and Henry S. Foote to Polk, February 10, 1848. Mississippians recommend Cornelius D. Hendren, a private in the Sixteenth Infantry Regiment, for a lieutenancy.
- 10 Feb From William W. Payne and James S. Green. ALS. DLC–JKP. Virginia planter (formerly Alabama congressman)

- Payne and Missouri congressman Green introduce Payne's relative Henry M. Clarkson, of Columbia, Mo., and support "his application" (probably for a Washington City clerkship).
- 10 Feb From James G. M. Ramsey. ALS. DLC-JKP. Asks to be a visitor of the U.S. Military Academy; supports former South Carolina congressman William Butler's solicitation of a midshipmanship for his son, James L.; describes congressional Whigs as "suicidal"; predicts "magnificent failure" for a pro-Zachary Taylor meeting in Tennessee on February 22; predicts that Tennessee will support the Democratic presidential nominee.
- 11 Feb From John Blair. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former Tennessee congressman recommends his nephews, Thomas K. and William P. Chester, for army appointments under the Ten Regiment Bill of 1848.
- 11 Feb *To Robert Campbell, Jr.*
- 11 Feb From A. D. Chesebro. ALS. DLC-JKP. Albany, N.Y., resident seeks Polk's autograph.
- 11 Feb From Ellison Dickey. ALS. DLC-JKP. Paterson, N.J., resident seeks Polk's autograph.
- 11 Feb *From Ralph I. Ingersoll.*
- 11 Feb From Lewis W. Jordan. ALS. DLC-JKP. Army surgeon notes that Roger Jones revoked acceptance of his resignation; recommends Roane County, Tenn., circuit court clerk Thomas A. Brown for a paymastership under the Ten Regiment Bill of 1848; seeks Polk's thoughts on the presidential election.
- 11 Feb *From William McDaniel.*
- 11 Feb To [William L. Marcy]. ALS. MB. Introduces Maryland state senator William D. Bowie.
- 11 Feb From James K. and Sarah Childress Polk to Henry C. and Amelia Greenwood Murphy. Partly printed N in Joseph Knox Walker's hand. NBLiHi. Invite New York congressman and his wife to dinner on February 16.
- 11 Feb From Charles H. Thomson. ANS. DLC-JKP. Committee member announces Polk's election to honorary membership in the "Autographic association" of Williams College, Williamstown, Mass.; requests "An acknowledgement in your own hand" and "Any autographs beside your own."
- 12 Feb From James Blakely. ALS. DLC-JKP. Pittsburgh real estate agent and politician encloses Charles Shaler et al. to Polk, February 2, 1848; seeks Polk's attendance at the Mercy Hospital Soiree and his "aid" in that hospital's construction.
- [12 Feb 1848] *From William Carey Jones.*

- 12 Feb *To Vernon K. Stevenson.*
- 13 Feb From Josiah N. Armstrong. ALS. DLC–JKP. Encloses a letter of January 14 from Robert Armstrong to Josiah about Josiah’s brother William McNeill Armstrong, who left school; solicits a navy appointment for “Willy.”
- 13 Feb From Albert Gallup. ALS. DLC–JKP. Complains that foes of the administration hold most federal appointments in New York; mentions the Barnburner-dominated state Democratic convention at Utica; chronicles disloyal factions in the Democratic-Republican and Democratic parties; supports keeping troops in Mexico.
- 13 Feb From John K. Kane. ALS. DLC–JKP. Introduces navy surgeon William P. C. Barton, who will make a request of John Y. Mason.
- 14 Feb From C. R. Peters. ALS. DLC–JKP. Collector in New York City seeks Polk’s autograph.
- [14 Feb 1848] From Marshall T. Polk, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that his bill for tuition and fees at Benjamin Hallowell’s Alexandria (Va.) Boarding School is \$122.16 1/2, but that Polk need not pay it all.
- 14 Feb From Vernon K. Stevenson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports having discussed the Grundy property with John M. Bass; explains that Felix Grundy’s and neighbors’ deeds granted access to the avenue but, in some cases, restricted building on or near it; recommends Polk accept the requirement to seek neighbors’ permission before closing or building on it; encloses a revision (not found) that Stevenson, Bass, and Nashville lawyer Edwin H. Ewing made today of a draft deed by John Catron. From Polk’s AE: the deed “was not satisfactory.” See also AL, draft of postscript. DLC–JKP.
- 15 Feb From Thomas H. Averett et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Committee encloses proceedings (not found) of a Democratic meeting in Halifax, Va., on January 24.
- 15 Feb From David L. Gregg. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. attorney for Illinois urges Polk to curb John Wentworth’s influence in postmaster appointments, as Wentworth opposes the administration and many Democrats want to prevent his reelection.
- 16 Feb From Joseph Hall (Mass.). ALS. DLC–JKP. Discusses a cane he left to be delivered to Polk before leaving Washington City on February 10; seeks a navy assistant pursership for son Frederick F.
- 16 Feb From John H. Lumpkin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Georgia congressman encloses printed resolutions of a pro-war Democratic meeting in Cobb County, Ga.; claims most voters in his district share the meeting’s views.

- 18 Feb From Jefferson Davis. ALS. DNA–RG 94. Recommends George E. Metcalf, who served in Mexico in the First Mississippi Rifle Regiment, for the U.S. Military Academy.
- 19 Feb *From Archibald Campbell.*
- 19 Feb *From Jacob Gould.*
- 19 Feb From James Lee. ALS. DLC–JKP. Offers his “services either in London or Paris, . . . in a private capacity”; recommends taking the loan under consideration by Congress in the United States.
- 19 Feb From C. H. Page. ALS. DLC–JKP. Corresponding secretary announces Polk’s election to honorary membership in the Philomathian Society of Shelby College, Shelbyville, Ky.
- 20 Feb From Michael Duffy. ALS. DLC–JKP. Seeks a civil or military job, noting his application of April 21, 1847; encloses William P. Rowles et al. to Polk, February 5, 1848.
- [21 Feb 1848] *From James Buchanan.*
- 21 Feb From James B. Van Blarcom. ALS. DLC–JKP. Yale College student seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 22 Feb *From Chester Ashley and John A. Rockwell to James K. and Sarah Childress Polk.*
- 22 Feb From Albert G. Brown et al. L, typed copy. TxHR–JD. Members of Mississippi’s congressional delegation, including Jefferson Davis, recommend lawyer James B. Haggin as customs collector at Natchez, Miss.
- 22 Feb *From Andrew J. Donelson.*
- 22 Feb From John C. Edwards. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclosed in John S. Barbour to Polk, June 29, 1848. Missouri governor recommends Henry M. Clarkson for a clerkship in Washington City.
- 22 Feb From Joseph W. Matthews et al. ALS. DNA–RG 59. Enclosed in Jefferson Davis to Polk, March 12, 1848. Mississippi governor and other state officials recommend William R. Lewis, a Mississippian in Belfast, as consul there.
- 22 Feb From Nathan H. Starbuck. ALS. DLC–JKP. Temporary clerk in Robert J. Walker’s office notes that Polk told Ohio congressman William Sawyer that he would help Starbuck obtain a permanent clerkship in Walker’s or William L. Marcy’s office, which Starbuck needs to support his family.
- 24 Feb *From Lydia Howard Huntley Sigourney.*
- 24 Feb From Fernando Wood. ALS. DLC–JKP. U.S. State Department dispatch agent at New York City encloses Polk to Wood, October 26, 1844, to prevent its publication; seeks Polk’s intercession against someone’s application to James Buchanan to replace Wood.
- 25 Feb From Harriet S. Ash. ALS. DLC–JKP. Philadelphia woman presses the case of her husband, Michael W., who wrote

- Polk "a few weeks ago" (not found) seeking a clerkship in Washington City.
- 25 Feb To [William L. Marcy].
- 26 Feb From John Macpherson Berrien et al. ALS. DLC-GW. Georgia's congressional delegation encloses a resolution by the state legislature (not found) recommending John B. McIntosh, son of James S. McIntosh, for a marine lieutenancy.
- 27 Feb From John Corcoran. ALS. DLC-JKP. Former Gallant Green, Charles County, Md., postmaster recommends Leonard S. Robey for a job, citing "Many applications . . . in his favour" (Robey to Polk, August 4, 1847, and nine ALsS to Polk by Robey, Corcoran, and others, March 15, 1846-July 26, 1847, in DNA-RG 59); seeks a promotion for Leonard's son (probably Jonathon), an army private.
- 27 Feb From William Henry Seibert. ALS. DLC-JKP. Concordville, Penn., fifteen-year-old asks for Mexican War documents to prove to a Whig he knows "that the war is just & constitutional"; plans on "writing a work if I can get the Document."
- 28 Feb From Jonathan D. Morris.
- 28 Feb From Pickett, Perkins & Co. L in William S. Pickett's hand. DLC-JKP. Reports the receipt of forty-four bales of Polk's cotton; encloses the *New-Orleans Price-Current, Commercial Intelligencer and Merchants' Transcript* of February 26.
- 29 Feb From James Buchanan. PL. Published in Senate Executive Document No. 52, 30th Congress, 1st Session, pp. 111-12. Transmits all dispatches from Nicholas P. Trist to Buchanan, and most from Buchanan to Trist, since Trist's appointment as commissioner to Mexico. Also published in *WJB*-7, p. 506.
- 29 Feb From Robert Campbell, Jr.
- 29 Feb From John Gadsby Chapman.
- 29 Feb From John W. Geary. ALS. DLC-JKP. Colonel in San Ángel, Mexico, recommends against Polk's reappointing Samuel H. Montgomery, an army captain dismissed by a court-martial after Geary preferred charges against him.
- 29 Feb From Sampson W. Harris et al. ALS. DNA-RG 107. Alabama congressmen recommend Perry E. Brocchus, law clerk in the Solicitor's Office of the Treasury Department, as chief clerk of the Pension Office.
- 29 Feb To Pickett, Perkins & Co. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Requests the purchase of items in an enclosed list for his plantation; acknowledges the company's letter of January 17; reiterates that his cotton should not be sold until he instructs otherwise.

- 1 Mar To John A. Mairs.
- 1 Mar From Edward F. Underhill.
- 2 Mar From Charles Francis Adams.
- 2 Mar From Arthur P. Bagby. ALS. DNA–RG 107. Recommends Perry E. Brocchus as chief clerk of the Pension Office.
- 2 Mar From Jefferson Davis.
- 2 Mar From James William Morgan, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Lynchburg, Va., youth thanks Polk for a copy of George Bancroft’s *History of the United States, from the Discovery of the American Continent*. From Polk’s AE: “He is the youth who presented to me a box of tobacco some months ago.”
- 3 Mar From William Conner. ALS. TU. Brownsville, Tenn., militia general solicits a captaincy in the regular army for his son, Private John Conner, of the Tennessee volunteers.
- 3 Mar From William H. Polk. ALS. DLC–JKP. Supports Archibald W. Burns’s wish to change from army paymaster to navy purser.
- 3 Mar To Vernon K. Stevenson.
- 4 Mar From John Kent. ALS. DLC–JKP. Boston man seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 4 Mar From John A. Mairs.
- 4 Mar To William L. Marcy. Auction listing for ALS of unknown current location. Encloses an 1846 statement by Winfield Scott (DLC–JKP) about the War Department’s orders of January 13 and March 2 for Zachary Taylor to move his troops to the Rio Grande.
- 4 Mar From Robert Pollock (“alias” Polk). NS. Nc–Ar. Templemoyle, County Londonderry, Ireland man believes (incorrectly) that his father’s cousin Ezekiel Polk was the president’s grandfather. From Polk’s AEI: “Referred to Bishop [Leonidas] Polk of Louisiana who is requested to furnish me with such information as he may possess on the subject.”
- 4 Mar From Stacy G. Potts. ALS. NjR. Trenton, N.J., lawyer and politician recommends James R. Hardenburgh, of New Brunswick, N.J., for a navy pursership or assistant pursership if the Ten Regiment Bill of 1848 passes; asserts that free trade has hurt New Jersey. Daniel Haines’s, Trenton editor Joseph O. Potts’s, and former New Jersey governor and congressman Peter D. Vroom’s signed concurrences follow the letter.
- 5 Mar From Lewis Cass.
- 5 Mar From Joseph H. Talbot. ALS. DLC–JKP. Reports that Joseph S. Watkins, navy agent at Memphis, has joined “a band of Swindlers”; recommends Memphis lawyer Henry Lake to replace him.

- 6 Mar From Owen Connolly. ALS. DLC–JKP. Hotelier and U.S. Capitol police officer accuses Simon Cameron, U.S. House gatekeeper James Wilson, and others of plotting and celebrating Andrew Beaumont’s rejection by the Senate as commissioner of public buildings in Washington City last year.
- 6 Mar *To James G. M. Ramsey.*
- 6 Mar From David Levy Yulee. ALS. DNA–RG 107. Recommends Perry E. Brocchus as chief clerk of the Pension Office in case of a vacancy, without “recommending or desiring the creation of a vacancy.”
- 7 Mar *From Louis McLane.*
- 7 Mar From Christopher T. Provost. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City tailor asks for Polk’s neck and wrist measurements so he can send “linen and cotten shirts of American Manufacture and sewed by a Democratic Girl of Connecticut.”
- 8 Mar From Sampson W. Harris. ALS. DNA–RG 107. Recommends Perry E. Brocchus as chief clerk of the Pension Office, having learned of the impending vacancy.
- 8 Mar From Daniel Kenney. ALS. DNA–RG 92. Jonesboro, Tenn., physician describes the conflict that arose after different officers signed contracts with Abraham L. Gammon and with Robert L. Blair to transport the same two volunteer companies from Jonesboro to Knoxville, Tenn.
- 8 Mar From Jesse Miller. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Butler, Penn., councilman and former congressman William Beatty as U.S. marshal for the Western District of Pennsylvania.
- 10 Mar *To Lewis Cass.*
- 10 Mar From William Jones Hampden. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City man blames his family’s poverty on his father’s work for Polk’s election in 1844; seeks a job in Washington City or the New York City post office as recompense.
- 10 Mar From Walter Merton Judd et al. ALS. DLC–JKP. Hartford, Conn., men seek Polk’s autograph.
- [c. 10 Mar 1848] From John K. Kane. ALS. DNA–RG 45. Enclosed in Charles D. Meigs to Polk, March 10, 1848. Praises Meigs; of Sandwith B. Drinker, “vouch[es] abundantly for his qualifications and claims.”
- 10 Mar *From Charles D. Meigs.*
- 10 Mar From Edgar K. Whitaker. ALS. DLC–JKP. Needham, Mass., politician seeks appointment for his son, probably James B., to the U.S. Military Academy; expects to see Polk in May after the Democratic National Convention; predicts that, in the election to replace Rep. John Quincy Adams, Democrats “cannot expect to elect our own candidate”

- but may “prevent the election of an opponent to the Administration.”
- 11 Mar From Richard Brodhead. ALS. DLC–JKP. Pennsylvania congressman recommends Randolph farmer and politician Hugh Brawley as U.S. marshal for the Western District of Pennsylvania.
- 11 Mar *From John P. Heiss.*
- 12 Mar From Jefferson Davis. ALS. DNA–RG 59. Encloses Joseph W. Matthews et al. to Polk, February 22, 1848.
- 13 Mar From James K. and Sarah Childress Polk to Edmund and Ann Matson Burke. Partly printed N in Joseph Knox Walker’s hand. DLC–EB. Invite the Burkes to dinner on March 17.
- 13 Mar *From Andrew J. Donelson.*
- 14 Mar From Walker Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for appointing his son Cameron a navy purser.
- [15 Mar 1848] *From James Buchanan.*
- 15 Mar From Margaret Eugenia Glynn Dubose Mayson Saunders. ALS. DLC–JKP. Widow of onetime Columbia, Tenn., lawyer Charles C. Mayson seeks appointment to the U.S. Military Academy for son James Hamilton Mayson, born in Polk’s Columbia house in 1832; also expresses interest in the Citadel, Charleston, S.C.
- 16 Mar *To John Anderson.*
- 16 Mar To Aaron V. Brown. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Describes John Catron’s views on John M. Bass and Polk’s dispute over the avenue adjoining the Grundy property; encloses the draft deed (not found) enclosed in Vernon K. Stevenson to Polk, February 14, 1848; asks Brown to settle the matter with Bass and Jacob McGavock or, if necessary, hire West H. Humphreys to represent Polk in court; asks Brown, if Stevenson is away, to do as requested in Polk to Stevenson, March 16, 1848.
- 16 Mar *To Vernon K. Stevenson.*
- 17 Mar *From Edmund Burke.*
- 17 Mar *To Simon Cameron.*
- 17 Mar From Lewis Cass and Linn Boyd. ALS. DLC–JKP. Enclose a letter from Thomas P. Moore (not found); ask Polk to modify an “order” so that Moore need not return to Mexico. From Polk’s AE: “gave orders thro’ the Adj. Genl. [Roger Jones] as requested.”
- 17 Mar From Louis McLane. ALS. DLC–JKP. Recommends Washington City dentist James S. Gunnell as U.S. marshal for the District of Columbia, at the request of Dr. Louis Mackall, Sr., Gunnell’s brother-in-law.

- 17 Mar From Moses W. Wilson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Yale College student seeks two copies of Polk’s and Sarah Childress Polk’s autographs.
- 18 Mar From William W. Bishop. ALS. DLC–JKP. Secretary, on behalf of “a society in yale college,” requests Polk’s autograph.
- 18 Mar From Peter Brady. ALS. DLC–JKP. Second Auditor’s Office clerk, at a committee’s direction, invites Polk to army captain Charles K. Hanson’s funeral at Trinity Church, Washington City, on March 20.
- 18 Mar *From Nathan Clifford.*
- 18 Mar From Margaret Elsworth Conger Clinton. ALS. DLC–JKP. New York City woman seeks nephew James Clinton Bolton’s appointment to the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, or marine corps.
- 18 Mar From Ebenezer N. Drury. ALS. DLC–JKP. Vergennes, Vt., clerk seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 18 Mar From William W. Irwin. AN. DLC–JKP. Former chargé d’affaires to Denmark reports that Robert J. Walker is too ill to attend today’s cabinet meeting.
- 18 Mar From William L. Marcy. LS in Archibald Campbell’s hand. DNA–RG 60. Returns Bryan Mullanphy to Polk, January 25, 1848; reports a balance of \$22,714.50 “not passed to the Surplus fund.”
- 19 Mar *From Cave Johnson.*
- 19 Mar *From James G. M. Ramsey.*
- 20 Mar From John Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Declines Polk’s March 16 invitation to visit Washington City; agrees to “submit” if Polk replaces him with Robert P. Dunlap.
- 20 Mar *To James Buchanan.*
- 20 Mar *To John Y. Mason.*
- 21 Mar From Albert Smith. ALS. DLC–JKP. Former northeastern boundary commissioner declines a paymastership in a regiment soon to be disbanded, but would accept a paymastership to accompany Ambrose H. Sevier to Mexico if Polk promises him another appointment within the year.
- 22 Mar From Gorham Boardman. ALS. DLC–JKP. Boston salesman seeks Polk’s autograph.
- 22 Mar *From James Page.*
- 23 Mar *From Francis Amay.*
- 23 Mar To Russell M. Houston. ALS, press copy. DLC–JKP. Encloses to the Nashville lawyer a statement about the 1839 settlement between William McKee and Alfred O. P. Nicholson in which Polk represented McKee, as Houston requested in a letter of March 14 (letter not found); returns the description of that settlement from 1839 (not found),

- in Polk's hand, which Houston enclosed; mentions that one of Houston's brothers, probably Alabama congressman George S., visited yesterday.
- 23 Mar From Julia Jervis, signed "Mrs. W. Jervis." ALS. DLC-JKP. Inventor of Cold Candy encloses a gift of that cure for "coughs, colds, hoarseness, sorethroat &c."; affixes a newspaper clipping of Henry Clay to Jervis, March 13, 1848, testifying to a similar gift's effectiveness.
- 23 Mar From A. [H. Laere] (name uncertain). ALS. DNA-RG 107. Seeks a promotion for Lt. Rossel.
- 23 Mar *From William M. Smyth.*
- 23 Mar *From George T. Wood.*
- [24 Mar 1848] *From James Buchanan.*
- 24 Mar *From Cave Johnson.*
- 24 Mar From Daniel Kenney. ALS. DLC-JKP. Solicits federal printing contracts for the defunct Democratic newspaper in Jonesboro, once called the *Tennessee Sentinel*, that former publisher Lawson Gifford wants to reestablish.
- 25 Mar *From Alfred Balch.*
- 25 Mar *From Ransom H. Gillet.*
- 25 Mar *From George P. A. Healy.*
- 25 Mar *From Pickett, Perkins & Co.*
- 25 Mar *From James Shields.*
- 26 Mar From James T. Asbury, Jr. ALS. DLC-JKP. Tennessee lawyer and Mexican War veteran seeks a job so he can travel to Mexico for "private business."
- 26 Mar *From Andrew J. Donelson.*
- 26 Mar From William S. Pilcher. ALS. DLC-JKP. Reports that today's Kentucky Democratic State Convention nominated Linn Boyd for governor; asks Polk to urge Boyd, the only one who can beat Whig John J. Crittenden, to accept.
- 26 Mar From Robert Barnwell Rhett. ALS. DLC-JKP. Encloses a copy of Rhett's letter of today to his sister Claudia Smith Stuart about Polk's promising to appoint her son Thomas M. to the U.S. Military Academy next year.
- 27 Mar From James Porter Brawley. ALS. DLC-JKP. Pennsylvania state senator denies the charge of drunkenness against his father, Hugh Brawley, that prevented Polk's appointing Hugh U.S. marshal for Pennsylvania's western district; asks to replace Victor E. Piolet, rejected by the Senate, as army paymaster.
- 27 Mar To John Catron. ALS, press copy. DLC-JKP. Asks Catron to read Polk to Vernon K. Stevenson, March 16, 1848, and try to settle the dispute with John M. Bass "without litigation"; notes that Sarah Childress Polk wants the new house

- finished by October 31, so she can send their furniture in the fall and have the house dry by next spring.
- 27 Mar From Alfred Gilmore. ALS. DLC–JKP. Butler, Penn., lawyer praises John Keatley, the new U.S. marshal for Pennsylvania’s western district; recommends William Beatty, denied that post, for another job, such as army paymaster if the Senate ultimately rejects Victor E. Piollet’s appointment.
- 27 Mar *From Ezekiel P. McNeal.*
- 27 Mar From Arnold Plumer. ALS. DLC–JKP. Denies claims of friend Hugh Brawley’s drunkenness.
- 27 Mar From William H. Polk. ALS. DNA–RG 94. Encloses a “petition and letters” (none found) at the request of “Capt Rough of the Mt Rifles,” whose “application” he supports.
- 27 Mar From Henry S. Weeks. ALS. DLC–JKP. Hannahatchee, Stewart County, Ga., man alleges that Thomas M. Griffin, U.S. marshal for Georgia, “wheedled” poor orphan Lloyd S. Benton, of Athens, “out of a lot of land” and resold it at a huge profit.
- 28 Mar From Jefferson Davis. ALS. DNA–RG 46. Reports favorably “on the value of Colts revolving pistol for mounted troops.” Published in James T. McIntosh, ed., *The Papers of Jefferson Davis*, vol. 3, *July 1846–December 1848* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1981), pp. 289–90.
- [29 Mar 1848] *From Cave Johnson.*
- [c. 30 Mar 1848] From Julia H. Anderson. ALS. DLC–JKP. Thanks Polk for appointing her brother Cameron a navy purser.
- 30 Mar From Charles Sabin. ALS. DLC–JKP. Providence, R.I., merchant encloses a knife he found in the street, whose marking suggests it is Polk’s.
- 31 Mar From James T. Asbury, Jr. ALS. DLC–JKP. Repeats his request for an army appointment in Mexico, Polk having denied it when they met and asked “*If I had any relations in the county of my residence in Tennessee*”; mentions the vacancy due to Samuel H. Montgomery’s dismissal for writing letters.

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